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EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT

Oi! Who are *you* calling Dragon's Breath?

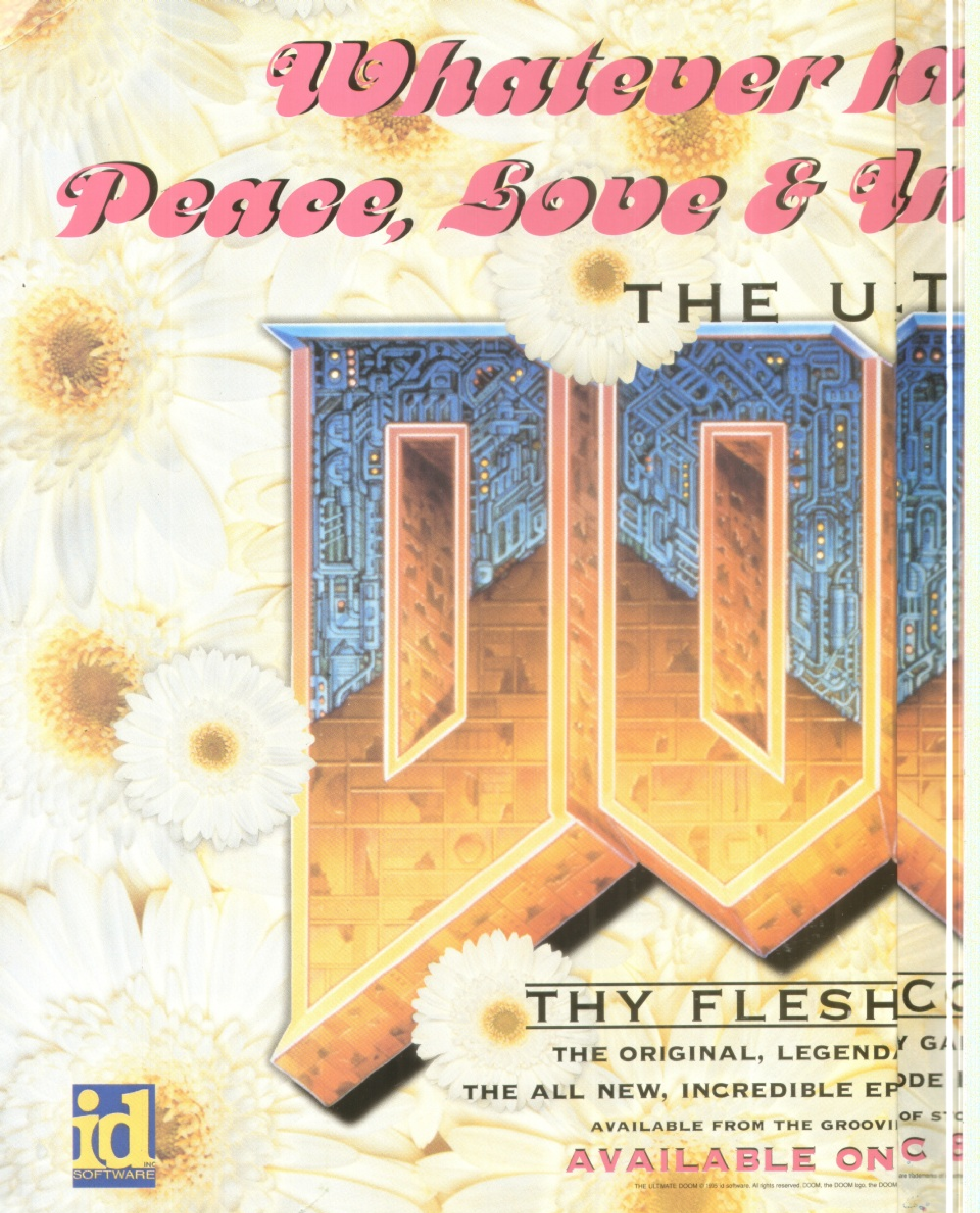
HI-OCTANE

Bullfrog's stunning space racer reviewed!

NO CD?
ASK YOUR
NEWSAGENT!

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Command & Conquer
- Simon The Sorcerer 2
- Prisoner Of Ice
- Civil War
- Powerhouse
- Striker '95
- And many more!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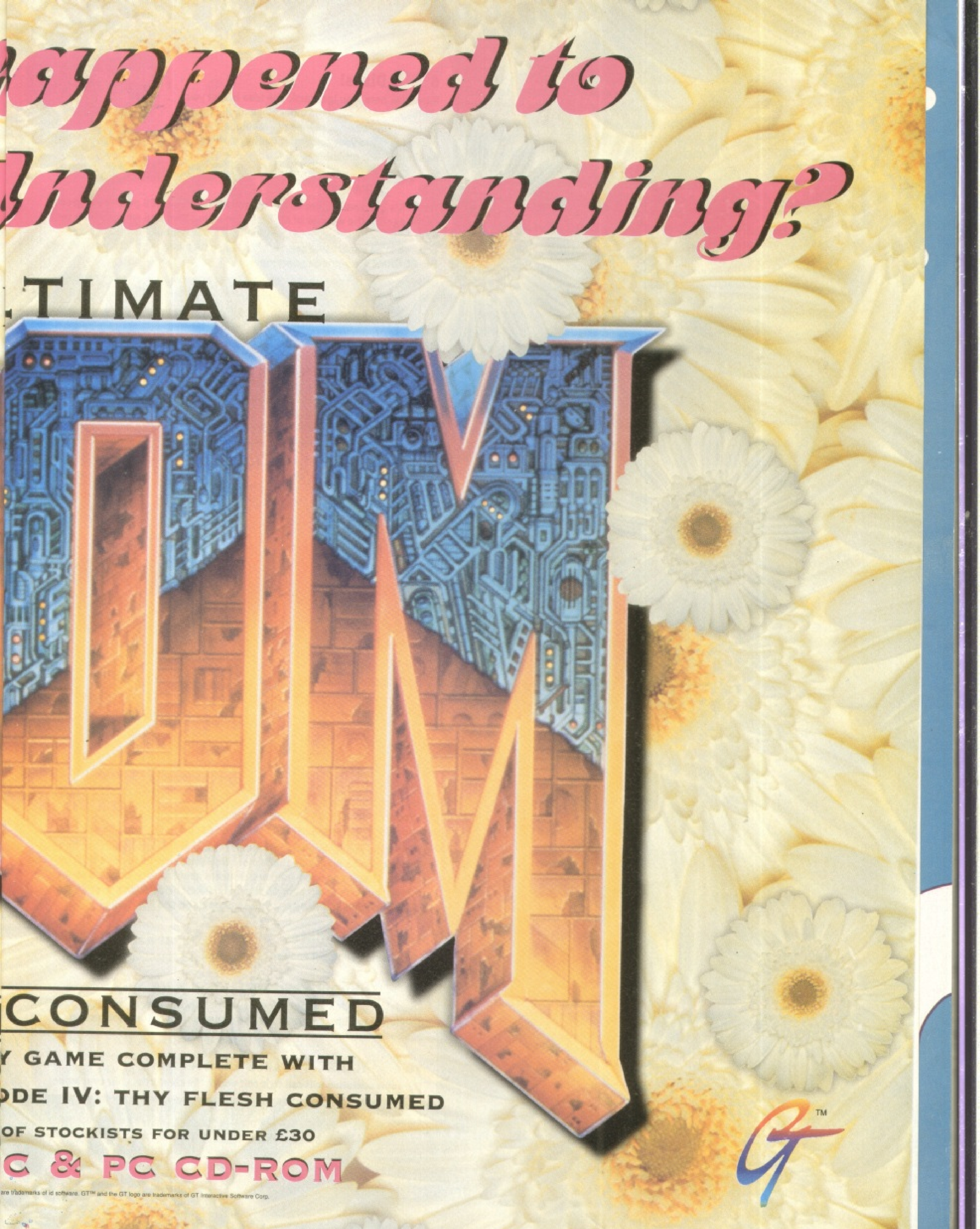
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WIN!
Your own 3-foot high Alien worth £500!

Boy, the times they are most certainly a-changing — and so is PC GAMES! Yes, this will be the last issue of PC GAMES you'll see for a short while because we're shutting down shop for a month to work on soem major magazine enhancements. Our plans are all a bit top secret at the moment, but suffice it to say look out for us again in September. Trust me — I think you'll like what you see...

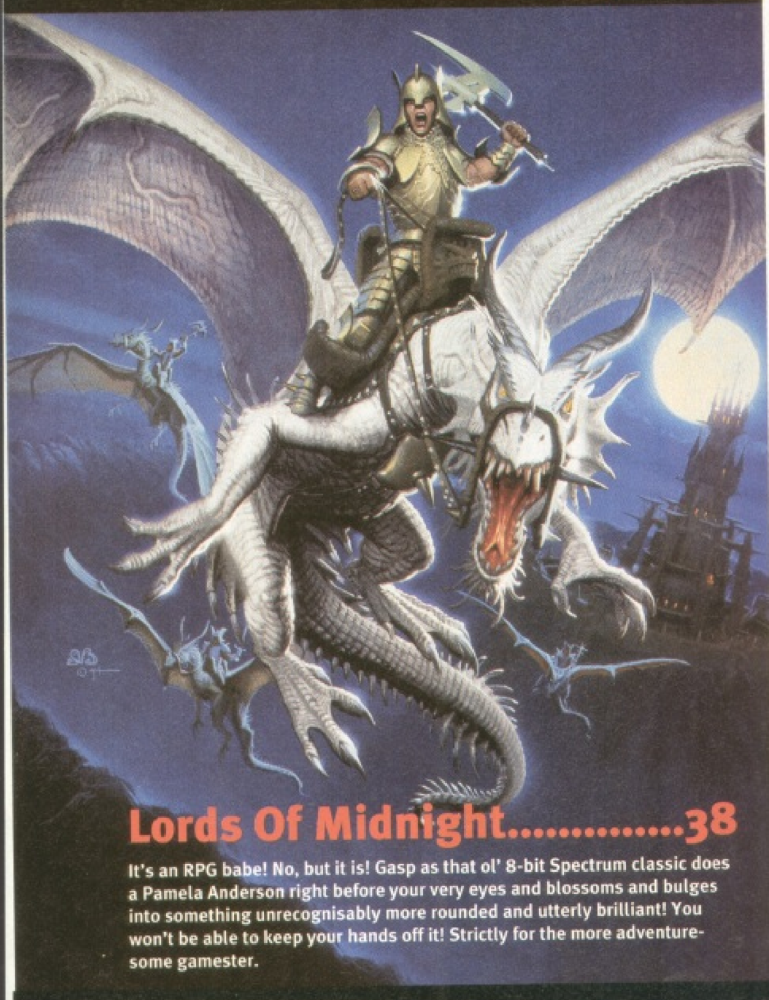
But enough about the future, what of now? Well, we've got some excellent stuff for you, including hot-off-the-presses reviews of Domark's long-awaited Lords Of Midnight and Bullfrog's incredible Hi-Octane. There are some top previews too, including Rise Of The Robots 2 and Primal Rage, two excellent beat-'em-ups which will be fighting for supremacy this Autumn.

The HD disks are tops too. There's Fuzzy's World Of Miniature Space Golf, which is one of the most enjoyable golf-style games we've played in *ages*, as well as complete working versions of the Spectrum classics, Lords Of Midnight and its sequel, Doomdark's Revenge. Meanwhile on the CD there's a brilliant playable segment from Sierra's Space Quest 6, a special track taken from Bullfrog's Hi-Octane, a sneak animated preview of LucasArts' Rebel Assault 2 (phwooaar!) and lots, lots more.

Anyway, I'll shut up now. You go off and enjoy yourselves and I'll see you again in a couple of months' time.

Stay well.

David Upchurch,
Editor.



Lords Of Midnight..............38

It's an RPG babe! No, but it is! Gasp as that ol' 8-bit Spectrum classic does a Pamela Anderson right before your very eyes and blossoms and bulges into something unrecognisably more rounded and utterly brilliant! You won't be able to keep your hands off it! Strictly for the more adventuresome gamester.

6 Disks!

Now, look here, you ignorami. The idea is that you actually read these pages before — and, indeed, during — any attempt to load our fabulous coverdisks onto your computer. Really, nothing could be simpler. But probably isn't.

12 News

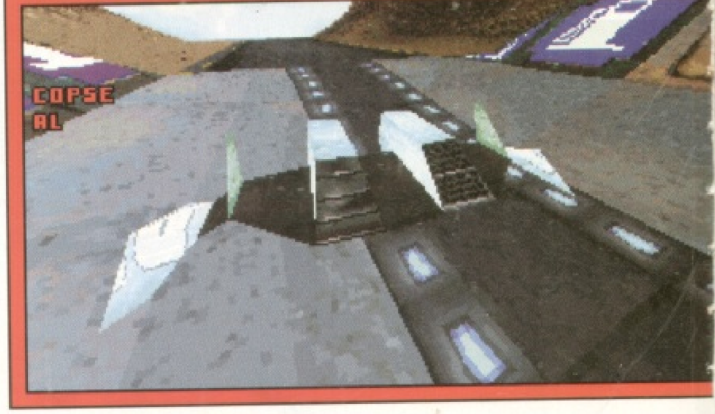
Gosh! It's 'Scoops!' galore as the gluttons from PC GAMES press their greedy noses against the window of Mr Exclusive's pie-shop! And what do they see? Why, seven pages packed to the crust with juiciest hunks of prime game news covered in an impeccable source, silly. And remember, every story comes with the PC GAMES' no-gristle guarantee!

22 Previews

Yes, it's Schubert-dip time again as we invite you to lie back and enjoy Britain's most widely respected Symphony of the unfinished game. In the first movement the incompleteness of the lietmotiv is established by Rise Of The Robots 2, though the brooding violence of the theme is dissipated by the woodwind section during the composer's search for spatial harmony in Space Quest 6. The rampaging coda as we approach The Last Dynasty prior to the SCi-intillating finale has been regarded as symptomatic of the composer's identification with pre-millennial Primal Rage.

Hi-Octane..............................62

...And hello butane! No but seriously, this little 3D texture-mapped cocktail of adrenaline comes complete with a gruntsome Magic Carpet-style engine that only runs on 4-star power! So, my fellow racers say 'çiao' to Signor Simplomo and pull up to the pump marked 'Grrrrrrrrr'.



37 Reviews

We've gone review-bonkers this month, readers. No really, we have, though! You won't find a magazine that's more bonkers about its reviews than us, I can tell you. That's 'cos we're bonkers! Bonkers about games, bonkers about reviews, bonkers about being... utterly bonkers! In fact all we ever do at PC GAMES is bonk! Er... hang on, that can't be right, can it?

66 CD Updates

CD Updates? Can't get enough of 'em, mate!

67 Budget Reviews

Specially curtailed and therefore price-friendly mini reviews which have been developed to allow two-fingers to be waved derisively in the direction of your bank-manager!

70 Yours... For Less Than A Fiver!

Our representative will call to insult you in the comfort of your own home.

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SCi-ence Fiction....................30

Sales Curve Interactive has got more games in development than a top sports photographer! Ah-ha-ha-ha. Well, okay, five. And yes we know we're not funny. XS, Lawnmower Man 2, Cyberwar, Gender Wars and that's just for starters. For finishers you'll have to turn to page 30.

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Alex Dampier Hockey$^{\text{CD}}$	55
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Full Throttle, Ultimate Soccer Manager, Super Streetfighter 2 Turbo, High Seas Trader and not forgetting the old Cheat Lab! The list may not, demonstrably, be endless but it is, nevertheless, quite long. Anyway, 'endless tips' is an oxymoron and we never use them in PC GAMES.

86 Subscribe to PC GAMES

How a subscription to PC GAMES might improve your sexual performance.

88 Back Issues

We talk to Christopher Reeve.

90 Win An Alien!

No, really it is! I mean, you can. Win one. An alien. Worth 500 smackers.

94 Dr Spanner's Bits 'n' PCs

The surgical mask slipped for a moment to reveal a startlingly helpful mouth which grinned wolfishly.

97 Letters

As in the amusingly constructed sentence which we are using to illustrate exactly how many letters, 97 isn't. Go on, count them!

98 Next Month!

...Will be interesting, if PC GAMES free — see this page to find out why.

Disks!

Whether ye be HD-endowed or blessed with a shiny CD, you'll find a copious helping of top-quality demos over the page. Yummilicious!

Electro Works

DISKS!

So you're after a taster of just some of the games doing the rounds on the PC at the moment? Okay, you've got 'em! Whether you're a CD user or you like to stick to your floppies, we've got the lot for you — take a look below to see what's in store!

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Most of these demos will run on a 486/SX PC with VGA, 4Mb RAM, DOS 5.0 or greater and a mouse. However, please note that Buried In Time requires Windows 3.1 or greater, 8Mb of RAM, a Soundblaster or 100%-compatible soundcard, and SVGA to run. Hi-Octane needs a 50MHz 486/DX2 to run at any decent speed, while Space Quest 6 requires a video card armed with VESA SVGA.

How To Load Your Demos

In a move to make your CoverCD and HD disks friendlier than ever, we've standardised the entire thing. Now, the process for loading the games and demos is exactly the same for each.

(1) Loading From The HD Disks

Place the disk in your internal drive, and then log onto it by typing **A:**, **B:** or whatever the drive letter happens to be. Now enter **PCG** to run the disk menu. From here, it all gets easier; simply select the demo you wish to play with the cursor keys, and then press RETURN to install it. You'll be given instructions about how to run each game on the menu screen.

(2) Loading From The CoverCD

Place the CoverCD into your CD-ROM drive and then log onto it by typing **D:**, **E:** or whatever the drive letter happens to be. Now enter **PCG** to run the CoverCD menu.

Demos on the CD take one of two forms — they can either be run direct from the disk or will need to be installed onto your hard drive.The menu item itself will tell you what needs to happen with each demo. To play each of the demos, just select the item you want with the cursor keys, then press RETURN — the rest will be done for you.

In the case of a Windows game, the menu will launch Windows and run the installer for you. Bear in mind that you will need to exit Windows to get back to the main menu. Note that you must have set up a path to your Windows directory for this feature to work properly. If you haven't, go back to the DOS prompt and enter **PATH=C:\WINDOWS** before running the CoverCD menu, assuming of course that Windows is stored in the **C:\WINDOWS** directory.

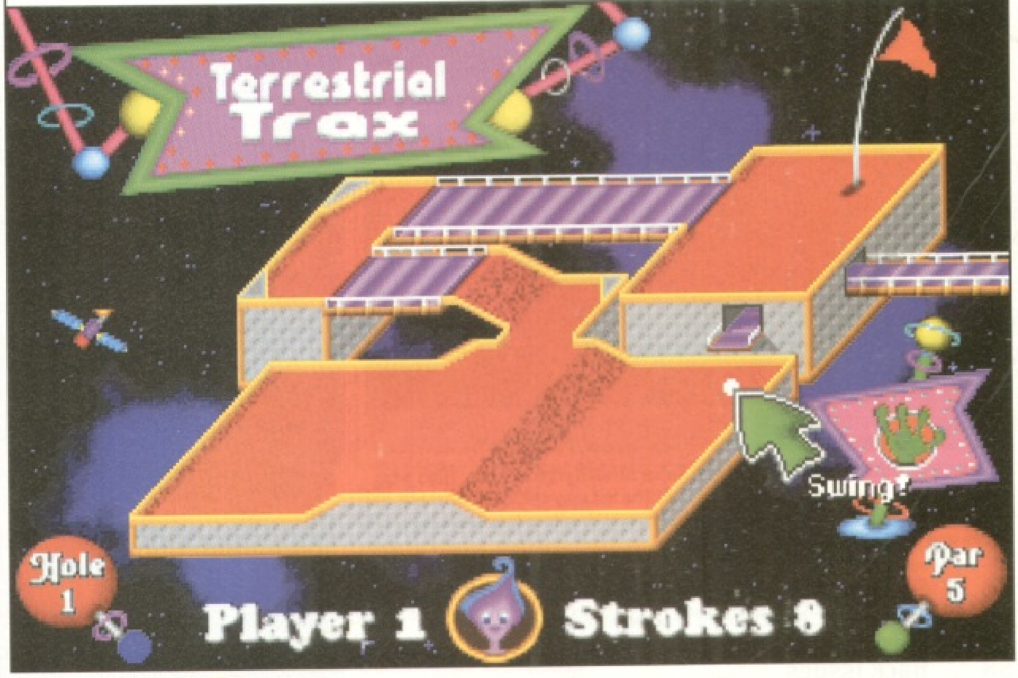
Fuzzy's World Of Miniature Space Golf

Pixel Painters (HD & CD)

Proving the theory that less is often more, Fuzzy's World Of Miniature Space Golf is one of the simplest, yet most addictive games we've played recently. Based on Crazy Golf, the idea is to send a Space Golf Ball around a Space Golf Course using the least number of shots. You can only take a certain number of shots, so each hole can be crucial to your performance. The presentation of Fuzzy's is excellent, and with its catchy tunes and addictive gameplay you'd better make sure you have some free time lined up!

How To Play

Thankfully Pixel Painters' presentation is so good, there's a great on-line instructions feature. Basically, though, the entire game is played using the mouse, pointing at the icons to move between holes. To play a shot, point-'n'-click on the ball, then drag the mouse in the opposite direction. A dotted line will appear, the length of which determines the strength of your shot. Let go of the button to hit the ball. Tip: Aim for the front of the hole, and don't hit the ball too hard or it will bounce out again!



Lemmings 3D

Psygnosis (CD only)

Everybody's heard of Lemmings, but this is Lemmings with an added dimension — literally! Say goodbye to all those 2D maps of yesterday, and say "Hi!" to the nightmarishly complicated 3D maps of the future. And this demo has a full 30 of the 100 in the final game. It's the same story as before: guide a bunch of the tiny suicidal chaps to safety, overcoming obstacles and traps, and through the door at the end of the level. Now, though, they can not only drop down and climb, but also move in and out of the screen! Lucky, then, that you can view the Lemmings Island from any direction — simply by using the mouse. And you thought Lemmings was difficult...

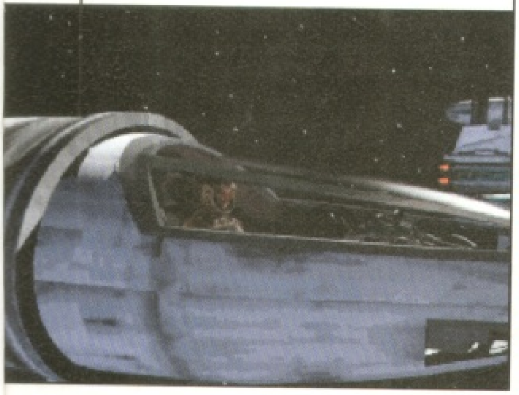
How To Play

The first level is simple: make one Lemming into a Builder to build up to the tower in the middle. All the Lems will follow him up there, and through the door to safety. To make him into a Builder, use the mouse to click on the Builder icon at the bottom of the screen then, as one Lemming walks towards the tower, left-click on his head. That's it!

For more extensive instructions, try the **READ.ME** file in the **L3D** directory.

Rebel Assault 2
LucasArts (CD only)

Okay, so the sequel to the biggest-selling CD game of all time (that's, yes, you've guessed it — Rebel Assault!) is still some months away, but far be it from us to withhold important information from our great mates, er, you. And this demo is the most important information yet, showing that the improved video playback system which LucasArts keeps banging on about is not only up and running, but damned excellent too! This is only a rolling demo sadly, but load it up, pump up the volume, sit back, and experience more of that LucasArts magic.

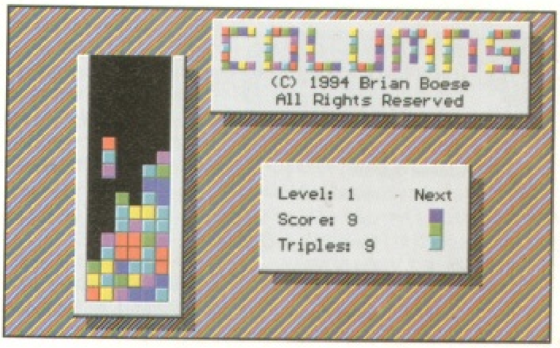


Columns
Brian Boese (HD & CD)

Columns is one of those unusual Tetris variants, which is sufficiently different enough from Tetris to make it original yet clever enough to make it playable. When the game begins, a column of three coloured blocks falls from the top of the play area — the large test-tube thing on the left of the screen. The aim of the game is to make as many rows of three or more blocks as you can at the bottom. Semplitica? Si!

How To Play

Use the left and right arrow keys to move the column — yes! — left and right, and the up and down arrow keys to change the order of the coloured blocks. As the colours are matched, they disappear; so the trick is to try to build up as few odd-coloured blocks at the bottom as you can. Full instructions are available in the game, or in the file **COLUMNS.DOC.**



Space Quest 6
Sierra (CD only)

Cheap shots, arse storylines, ridiculous gags... yes, it's time for another adventure with Roger Wilco, intergalactic janitor, in his sixth (*sixth!* Can you believe it?) Space Quest outing. Funny, isn't it, that over the last few years Roger has not only aged, but also he's become more colourful and well-defined, not to mention learning how to speak along the way. This is the first Space Quest to feature speech — and we're sure you'll like it.

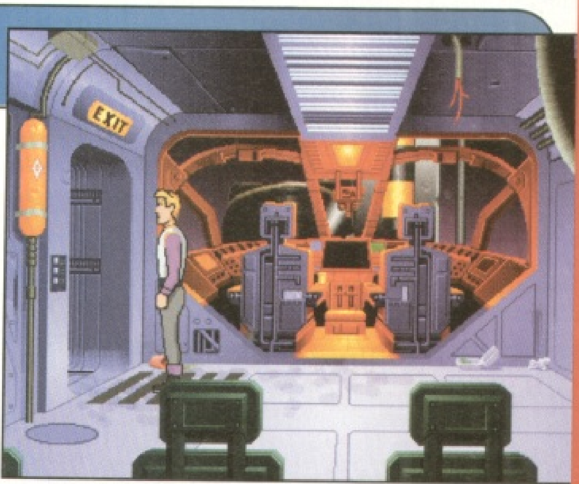
Space Quest 6 is a fairly standard adventure, but like the previous five installments it's got that special Sierra brand of humour, which you'll either hate or, quite probably, hate. Don't be expecting any LucasArts marvels here, just be ready for a few gags and some interesting pastiches on the sci-fi genre, and you won't be disappointed.

How To Play

Once you've installed the demo onto your hard disk, run it and wait for the spaceship bridge to appear. Roger's the one outside the window, squeegying. Don't touch anything for now, wait and watch what happens.

Eventually, you'll be given control of Roger. Using the mouse, you can select actions by clicking on one of the first four buttons (FEET — movement; EYES — descriptions; HANDS — using or taking objects; and MOUTH — talking).

Use your eyes on everything, and if something's takeable, take it — you never know when it will come in useful. Click on POCKETS to bring up your inventory, HELP to show what each of the buttons does, and CONTROL to change your preferences for the game.



QUAZAR LIVE

ALERT! ALERT!
My disk is faulty!

Due to the massive number of disks duplicated, the odd one might be a touch faulty. If you're unlucky enough to get one of these, don't despair because help is at hand. Whatever you do DON'T SEND THEM TO US! Simply send them off to the following address with an SAE for 28p:

PC GAMES Bodged Disks,
Diskxpress,
Unit 7, Willow Court,
Bourton Industrial Park,
Bourton-on-the-water,
Gloucestershire GL54 2HQ.

If you think you can solve your problems over the phone, try calling the disk helpline on **(01451) 810788**. The helpline is open between 3pm and 5pm on weekdays.

Making A Boot Disk

If you're having problems running any of this month's floppy games try making a boot disk. Take a freshly formatted floppy disk, slap it into the disk drive (I'll assume it's drive A for the moment) and type: **SYS A:**. The system files will be transferred and within seconds you'll have a fully-functioning boot disk on your hands.

All you then need to do is leave the floppy in the disk drive, reset your PC and finally try loading the game again. Don't take the disk out of the machine as it boots up because you want the PC to read the information from the floppy rather than the hard disk.

What the... HELP!

All these demos require 4Mb of Expanded (EMS) memory to run and at least 590K of free base memory, except where stated otherwise in the System Requirements panel opposite. If you have this, not Extended memory (XMS), they shouldn't cause you any problems whatsoever.

- Except where specified, these demos do not work under Windows and may not be compatible with Doublespace, QEMM 386 or Stacker disk compression software.

The Fine Print Bit...

The PC GAMES coverdisks are rigorously checked for viruses, but coverdisks are used at the reader's own risk. PC GAMES can accept no responsibility for damage to either data or hardware caused by using the coverdisks.

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Lords Of Midnight & Doomdark's Revenge

Mike Singleton (HD & CD)

Lords of Midnight and Doomdark's Revenge are two classic adventures from the days when the Sinclair Spectrum ruled supreme in computer gaming. Mike Singleton's astonishingly complex games are still worthy even today, but the new updated Lords Of Midnight — which includes these two original games when you buy the package on CD-ROM — reminds us just how far computers have come in the last ten years. These two complete games are exactly as they were on the Spectrum. Ah, memories...

How To Play

Both games must be installed to your hard drive, even from CD. From the CD menu, select the demo you want to install (both demos take up roughly 300Kb of hard disk space), and hit RETURN. You'll find a vast amount of instructions for both games in the respective directory: **MIDNIGHT.TXT** in the folder **LORDS**; and **REVENGE.TXT** in the folder **DR**.

However, to get you started, here are the control keys for the two games...

Lords Of Midnight

Compass Direction Keys

1	North
2	North-East
3	East
4	South-East
5	South
6	South-West
7	West
8	North-West

General Options

Q	Move
E	Look
R	Think
T	Choose
U	Night
A	New Game
D	Old Game
G	Yes
J	No
M	Select
ESC	Exit

Doomdark's Revenge

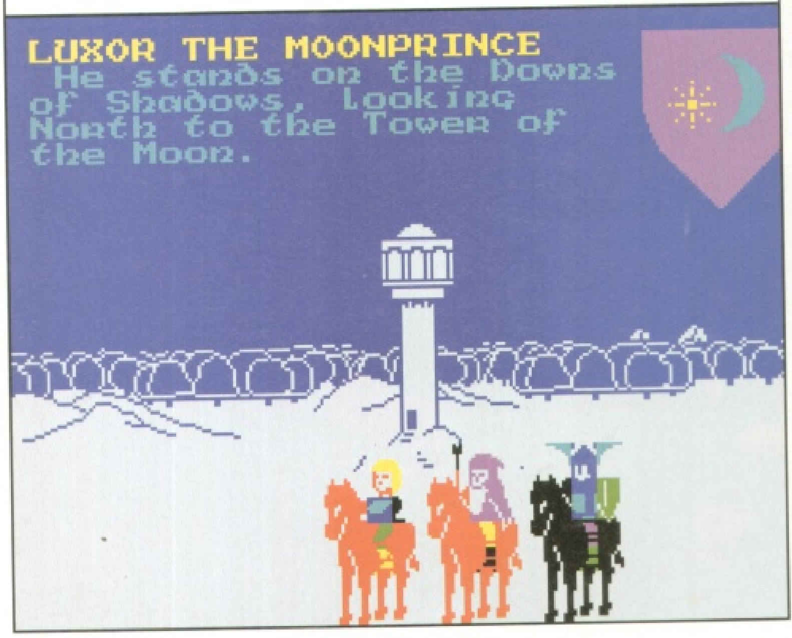
Compass Direction Keys — As above.

General Options

Q	Move
W	Look
E	Choose
R	Check Place
T	Check Battle
Y	Check Army
U	Check Person
D	Night
F	Dawn
S	Save
J	Load
G	Yes
H	No
M	Select

Character Selection

C	Luxor
V	Morkin
B	Tarithel
N	Rorthron


LUXOR THE MOONPRINCE
He stands on the Downs of Shadows, Looking North to the Tower of the Moon.

Hi-Octane

Bullfrog (CD only)

What's this? Bullfrog, the company apparently dedicated to originality, coming up with a racing game? Ah, but this is racing with a difference: if you can't win races by skill alone, KILL ALL YOUR OPPONENTS UNTIL YOU CAN! Yep, your Hover-vehicle is armed to the gills with minigun rounds and rock-hard rockets, so any budding Michael Schumachers of the future (yes, Michael, we don't forget that easily) should find bumping off your enemies not only effective, but downright fun!

How To Play

In this demo you will be racing against other computer-controlled Hover-vehicles around a simple, roughly oval track. This demo features a single-player mode and a multi-player mode.

When you enter the game, choose Options to configure your game, including the number of computer players and the difficulty level. Now select Play, then hit the RETURN key when the demo track appears. Select one of the two Hover-vehicles available using the right and left arrow keys, then hit RETURN again. You will then be transported to the start line.

Hi-Octane supports most major joypads, including Gravis and Phase 9 Phantom controllers, where the following applies:

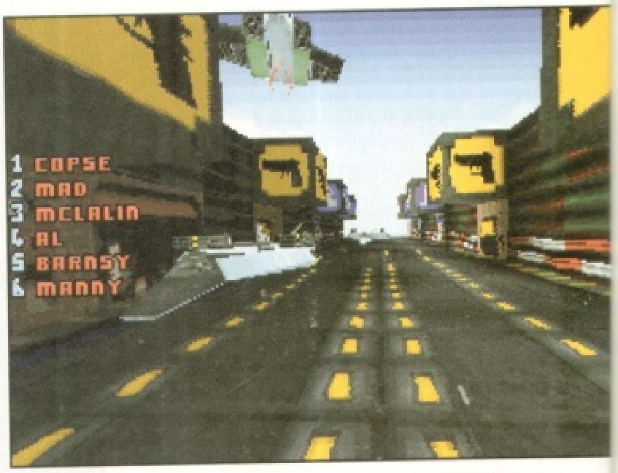
Button 1	Mini-gun
Button 2	Missiles
Button 3	Turbo

Pull backwards on the pad to brake.

If you're playing on the keyboard, the following information might prove handy:

Accelerate	Up cursor
Brake	Down cursor
Left	Left cursor
Right	Right cursor
Mini-Gun	Z
Missiles	X
Turbo	C

Further instructions can be found in the **README.TXT** file in the **HI-OCT** directory of the CD.



Apache Longbow

Digital Integration (CD only)

From the company which brought you the great Tornado comes the ultimate simulation of the beefy Apache Longbow helicopter gunship. At least, that's what DI tells us, and you'll have to take its word on that because this cut-scene is all you're getting so far. We'll bring you a full demo soon, but until then keep watching the skies!

Squarex
Soleau Software (CD only)

It's a bit basic, but this Amidar/Painter variant is maddeningly addictive. Use the cursor keys to move your yellow cube along the lines between the squares. The object is to enclose each of the grey squares with paint, and when you've surrounded them all, you'll move on to a more complicated level. Avoid the mean orange cubes, who wander randomly along the lines — if you bump into one, you'll lose a life. Full instructions are available by pressing 'H' on the title screen, or in the file **SQUAREX.DOC**.

Buried In Time
US Gold (CD only)

The Journeyman Project, a Quantum Leap-style project to jump around in time, formed the basis of one of the pioneering adventure games ever, using pre-rendered graphics to create realistic worlds. Buried In Time is its sequel, over two years in the making and sprawling over three CDs.

In the full game you'll leap between seven locations in the space-time continuum, from Leonardo da Vinci's workshop to a futuristic space station. For the purposes of this demo, though, you're in a medieval village, complete with castle and battling knights, for a brief taste of what's yet to come. There's also a gallery, showing over 70 stills from the final game, a game overview, and a preview of certain scenes from Buried In Time.

How To Play

Load up the menu, then select Buried In Time and hit RETURN. The program will automatically load Windows, and install Microsoft Video for Windows for you. You must have 4Mb of hard disk space available for this. Once installed, turn the volume up and listen to the narrator welcome you to the game. Using the mouse, click on the third button to enter the playable demo. You'll find yourself outside a medieval house.

Clicking on the left and right arrows (bottom-right of the screen) will turn you around, while the up and down arrows enable you to look up and down. The arrow pointing into the screen makes you walk forward. If either of the arrows is greyed-out, then you can't move that way. Occasionally you'll see an object which can be manipulated — such as the door to the house. Move the cursor over the door, and left-click the mouse. The door will open, allowing you to enter. Have fun!

© 1995 Presto Studios Inc.

TeenAgent
Metropolis (CD only)

Despite its rather, ah, basic appearance, we found this cute graphic adventure too good to resist. Hailing from Poland, Metropolis Software might not have produced much before, but it's one to watch out for in the future. To play, use the PCG menu to install, then change to the **TEENAGE** directory and type **SOUNDSET**. Choose your sound source, then type **TEENAGNT** to run the demo.

How To Play

When the introduction finishes, you'll find yourself standing outside a Secret Agent academy — and the first thing you need to do is get in. Use the left mouse button to look, the right mouse button to move or use, and point the cursor at the top-left of the screen to bring up the inventory. Do this, then left-click on the papers. Now click on the guard, and he'll let you in. Have fun exploring!

Framed!
Machination (CD only)

Framed! is an adventure game, with a plot that unfolds as you play — or so it says in the instructions. Which is good, because it means I don't have to explain it here. Seemingly, you've been locked in a cell for some reason, and the object is to evade detection, escape, then find out why you were in pris.

How To Play

Your character can be moved using keys or joystick, although the former is recommended. Apart from a little dexterity control-wise, the rest of it is pretty self-explanatory, except for the keys which you'll find next. Brief instructions are available in-game, while the file **GAMEPLAY.DOC** contains the full monty.

P	Pick Up	RETURN	Inventory
ALT	Use Object	D	Drop Object
SPACE	Manipulate	T	Throw Object
E	Examine	L + Cursor Key	Look In Direction

Jagged Alliance
Sir-Tech (CD only)

In the style of UFO and Sabre Team, Jagged Alliance is a turn-based strategy game reminiscent of Commando, Rambo and... um, the A-Team. Guide your team of green-shirted mercs to beat the red-shirted nasties into a bloody pulp. Armed to the teeth with guns, knives, grenades and, well, bags of other goodies, use your cunning to use the weapons to kill off all of the computer-controlled opponents. First one off the island, chaps!

How To Play

Using the mouse, click on the first player you want to move. His (or, indeed, her) face will light up in the respective panel on the left or the right of the main screen. The number next to the face is that character's Action Points. This determines exactly what each character is capable of in each turn.

Moving and using weapons each use up Action Points, the exact number depending on the distance moved or the power of the weapon. So if Bob, say, has 20 Action Points, he can move a distance of 12, then fire a gun worth 8 (12 + 8 = 20, see?).

To move the character, use the mouse to move the cursor to the required position. The number which appears in the cursor is the number of Action Points required to move there. If you have enough, double-click the left mouse button and he will move.

To fire a weapon, place the weapon in the character's left hand, then click the right mouse button on the enemy. The cursor will change from a square to a diamond, showing that the weapon is armed. Click the left mouse button on the enemy, and the character will use the weapon. Note: the guns become less accurate the further away you stand. You need to stand close to your enemy to use the knife.

When you've exhausted your moves, click on DONE at the top of the screen, and the computer will take his turn. During this time your characters will build up Action Points (unless they're being attacked!), so when the computer finishes his turn you'll start off afresh. Good luck, soldier!

Full instructions are available, once installed, in the file **README.TXT** in the **JADEMO** directory.

"MAKE IT SO."

Be part of an epic new adventure with Captain Picard™, Commander Riker™ and all the rest of the Starship Enterprise™ crew.

"A Final Unity" is an original intergalactic epic of mystery and danger that takes you from the outposts of Federation space through treacherous encounters with alien starships and beyond - into the uncharted dangers of a massive nebula.

Take control from the bridge or leave the ship to embark on critical Away Team missions. This interactive CD-ROM journey is a true extension of the famed TV series with accuracy in all details, including voice-overs by all seven of the television stars.

Beam your crew to mysterious planets. Manoeuvre the U.S.S. Enterprise™ through strange galaxies to worlds beyond your imagination. You're in command, working hand in hand with the most respected crew in the Federation!

No other space adventure comes close to the reality of this CD-ROM excursion which is brought to life by characters who speak to you, rich cinematic sequences, incredible SVGA graphics and CD-quality sound and music. Experience hours of entertaining exploration and discovery as you freely travel the universe to unravel a mystery from the ancient past in this STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION® epic.

Make it so. Take your post and Engage!

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION® "A Final Unity.™"

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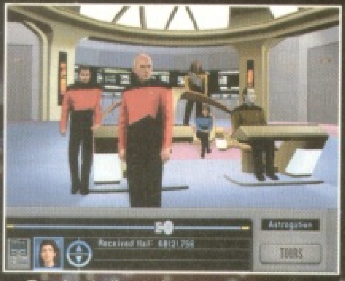
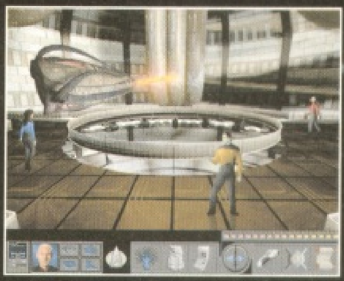
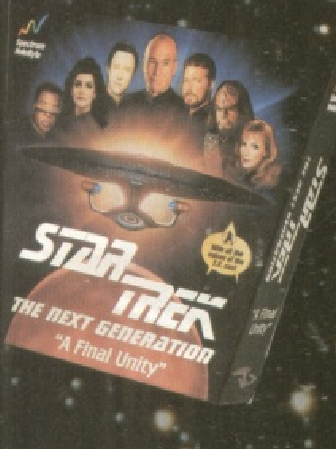
With all the
voices of the
TV Cast!


Astrogation

Tension boils on the bridge as another Red Alert appears imminent



Alert your Away Team and pick the right combination of talent for each critical mission


Spectrum HoloByte
STAR TREK
THE NEXT GENERATION
"A Final Unity"

CD-ROM

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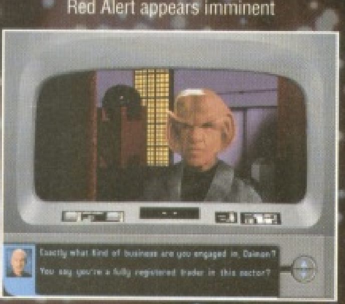
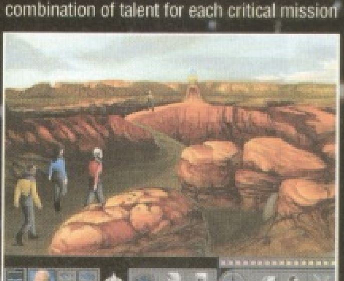
IBM CD-ROM



Exactly what kind of business are you engaged in, Daimon?
You say you're a fully registered trader in this sector?

Open hailing frequencies and prepare for the unexpected



Beam down to exotic worlds as the mystery of an ancient and highly advanced civilisation slowly unfolds.

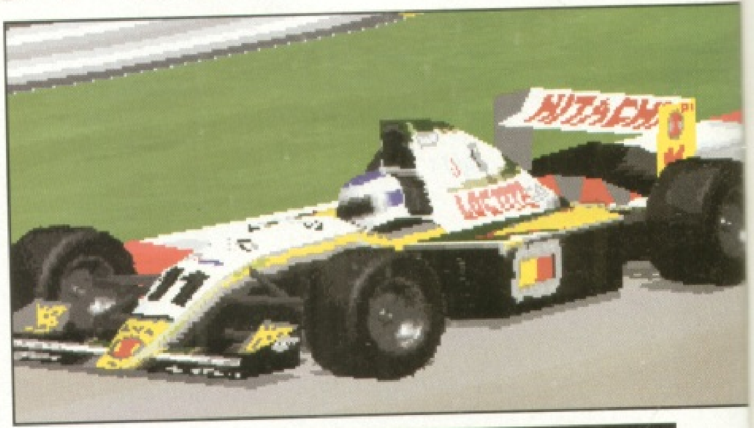
Also look for STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION'
"Future's Past™" on Super NES.

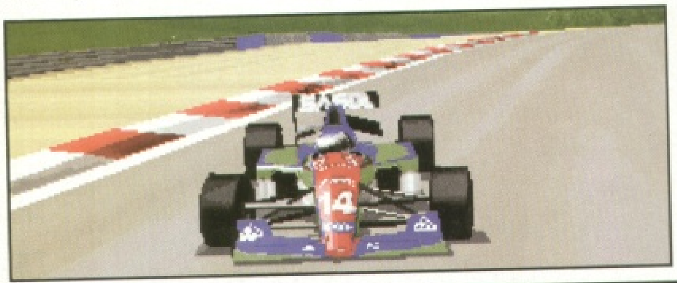
Spectrum HoloByte MICROPROSE

MICROPROSE, THE RIDGE, CHIPPING SODBURY, BRISTOL BS17 6AY

F1GP2 — First Pics!

Last month, PC GAMES exclusively revealed it had actually seen F1GP2 MicroProse's follow-up to its hit racing simulation, Formula One Grand Prix. We know that isn't much good to you, the poor, clueless reader, but now — thanks to much badgering by us — we can exclusively print actual in-game shots! So here they are, then, in glorious SVGA. Feast your eyes on them, our children..





Capturing The Spirit Of English Footy

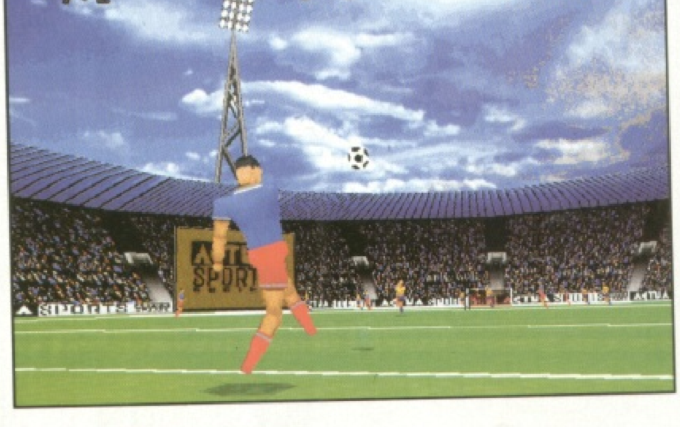
Gremlin's Actua Soccer, which has had Dave drooling off pounds of fat since he visited Sheffield a month or two ago, will capture everything that makes British football Great when it is released next month — and it's all thanks to soccer stars Andy Sinton and Chris Woods. You see, the two Sheffield footy heroes are the latest celebs to be 'motion captured'.

This is the process where 'real, live' people are filmed prancing around in a darkened room with lots of tiny white balls attached to them, and the resulting images ported straight across into a computer to form wire-frame 3D models that mimic human movement perfectly. These 3D models are then fleshed out with texure-mapped and Gouraud-shaded polygons and the resulting images plonked into games. What this means is that in Actua Soccer it really will be England goalie Chris Woods tipping your shots over the bar and Andy Sinton curving shots into the back of the net.

The process has proved strange for both boys. "The thought of actually getting my goalkeeping movements into a game is quite daunting, really," admits Chris Woods. "When you were young you saw people starring in films, and recently it has started happening in games. You could say it's a dream come true, and it's certainly going to be very interesting seeing the outcome."

QPR Judas Andy Sinton is equally excited: "It's a big change from providing the action on the football pitch. It was quite hard work, but I'm certainly looking forward to the finished game."

Actua Soccer will be the first release to use Gremlin's in-house capture facilities, dubbed and trade-marked 'Motion Analysis'. The kit cost the company quite a lot of cash. We'll be able to see if the results are worth it when the game is released in September.



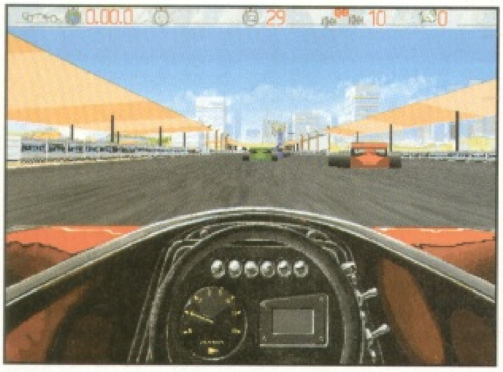
Race In-dy States

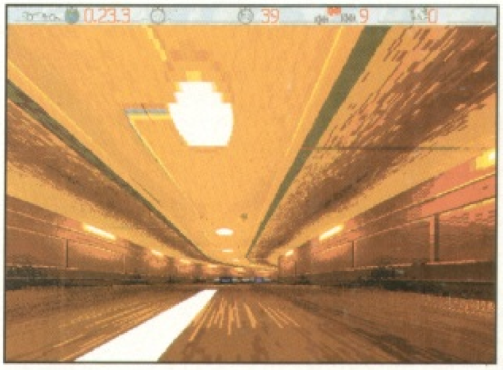
Whingeing old moustache-face Nigel Mansell have been a top IndyCar driver, but his roaring World victory in his first season was somewhat overshadowed by his crushing defeats the following year, in which an American called Al Unser whipped him into submission.

A logical and fair question at this point is: who the heck is Al Unser? Well, God only knows, but he's the subject of Mindscape's new racer entitled Al Unser Jnr Arcade Racing.

More of an adrenaline-pumper than an in-depth sim, Al Unser promises to be a fast and furious driving game owing more than a passing nod to Ridge Racer *et al*. It will be fully-networkable (with up to eight human players taking part in the proceedings) and configurable to suit everyone's machine and tastes.

Developed by Mindscape Bordeaux, the new, snazzy name for Warriors creators Atreid Concept, Al Unser Jnr will feature 15 tracks, four styles of play and 10 other Indy-style racers. Coming in now-obligatory SVGA, this promising-looking arcade fest will be released next month.





Ascon Take Pole Position

September will see the release of Ascon's Pole Position, the first of many Formula One management games that will enable you to control every aspect of an F1 season from a comfy chair – just like Frank Williams.

Every decision has to be made by you, from shaping new prototypes to handling awkward questions at press conferences and formulating race strategies. Each race will be covered TV-style, with rendered graphics depicting the on-track action, and commentary detailing the race events. Ascon is promising atmosphere so real you can almost smell the burning rubber, so Benetton-style refuelling mishaps will undoubtedly feature heavily.

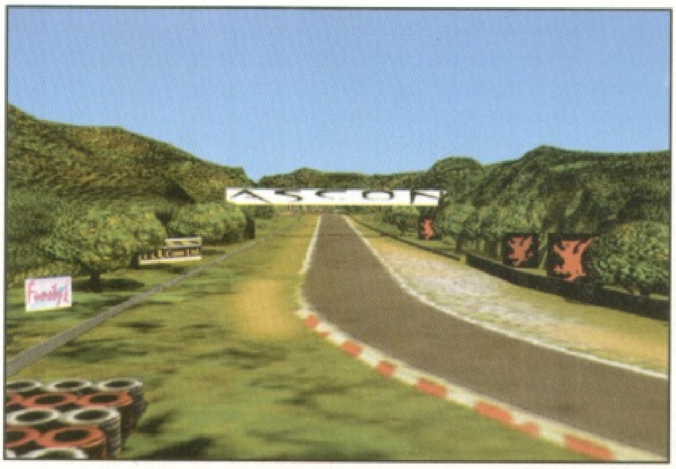
But rather that sitting back and putting its feet up once Pole Position is finished, Ascon will concentrate on two other releases, with subject matters that couldn't be further apart if they were based on Jason Donovan and homosexuality.

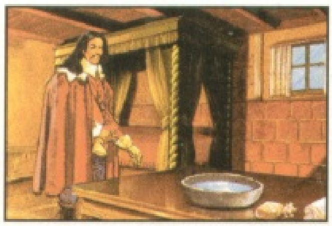
Elizabeth 1 is an adventure that takes place in the days of the eponymous monarch. But rather than playing an ugly ginger-haired ruler, you step into the shoes of a dashing adventurer and ship owner. The game takes place over 30 years, so key historic events like the Spanish Armada and, erm, other things will feature heavily.

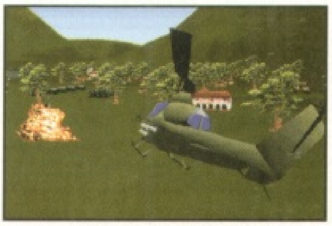
But rather than being a pure graphic adventure, Elizabeth 1 will have its fair share of arcade action, including animated knife fights. You'll be able to play as a patriot or a pirate, depending on your social persuasions, shaping your own destiny and, according to the press release, being a part of the greatest story ever told.

And then there's Blades Of Justice, a futuristic helicopter simulation that should fly into the PC skies early next year. Ascon is going mission crazy with this one, designing and implementing over 70 of the blighters, so longevity should be one of the game's plus-points.

With a release date so far off, information is not surprisingly hard to come by, but rest assured that we've sent our news hounds sniffing into the affairs of Ascon, and we'll hopefully have something more concrete within the next couple of months.







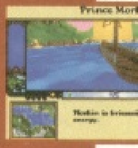
Team Talk

Who are the geezas who write PC GAMES? And just what or who has taken their fancy this month? All is revealed below...

David Upchurch

Editor

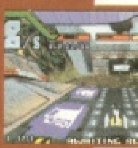
Dave's been knocking around the software industry for many years now, and he often waxes lyrical about the supposed 'Good Old Days'. So he was in hog heaven when he got to review Lords Of Midnight, which is a 90s update of the old Spectrum monochrome classic.



Alex Simmons

Reviews Editor

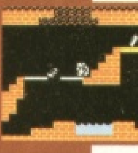
Young Alex likes his cars fast and his women faster – which is why he liked Bullfrog's surprise release, Hi-Octane (although he was disappointed by its lack of ladies). "I love racing around, blasting other people off the road – and I love doing it on a computer too," he burbled.



David Kelsall

Art Editor

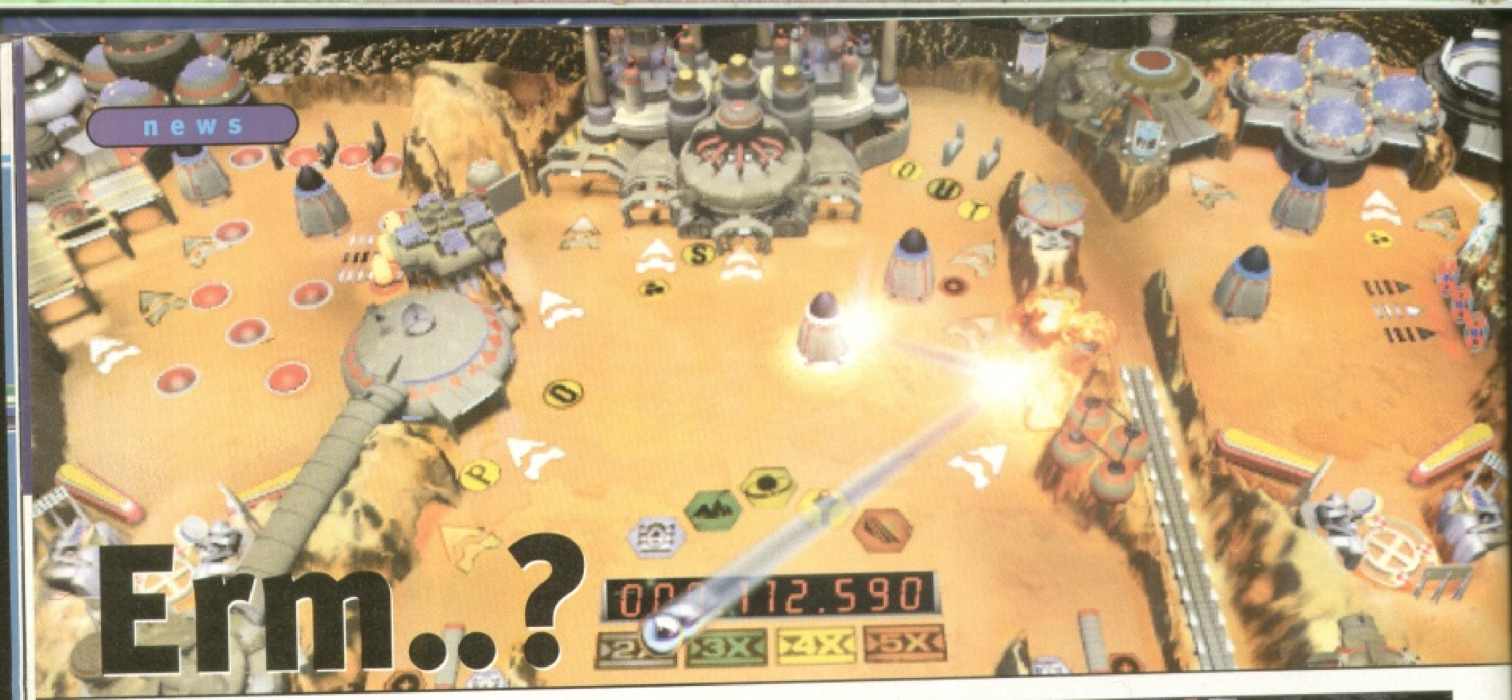
Dave the Ed's not the only team member who has a special fondness for anything created before 1990. Yes, Dave K's a nostalgia freak too. In fact, this month he's spent all his spare time playing Monty Mole on a Mac Spectrum emulator. "Monkey nuts!" he screamed.



Pete Barrell

Designer

Hankies out, girls! Yes, young Pete is leaving PC GAMES to become Art Editor on NMS, EMAP's official Nintendo magazine. Any parting words, Pete? "Oooh, I don't know. I saw a man talking to a dog in the pub. It was goody-goody gumdrops." Yes, he will be missed.



Erm..?

Two tabs of whatever those boys and girls at Sierra are smoking, please! Its first foray into the world of metal balls sounds like the most drug-induced concept we've ever heard of. (Of course, when we say 'drugs' we mean caffeine and aspirin, not nasty rocks of crack.)

You want proof? Okay. Sierra Ultra Pinball: Outpost Odyssey is a 3D pinball simulator that can be played in a number of different ways. For those who frown upon 'wacky baccy', the traditional 'bash the ball and get as many points as possible' mode is in there, and can be played on your own or against three mates. In this mode, a number of different views can be selected, and there are accompanying video clips and graphic rewards as incentives to do well. There are even tips from world class players — including the current World Champion.

But real space-heads will want to use the ball to start colonies and find spectacular Easter eggs and hidden bonus cows. But you'll have to guide your ball past craters and robots as you attempt to build a space civilisation. Your ultimate goal — obviously — is to build a starship to send life to another world. Weird...

Sierra is developing the world's first specially-devised controller to accompany the game (which will be Windows '95 compatible, by the way). Sierra Ultra Pinball: Outpost Odyssey will be released in September.

Hello, my dear friends — or should that be goodbye? You see, I have some exceptionally sad news to impart (well, it's sad for me — no doubt there will some out there celebrating when they hear it). What am I going on about? Well, I'll tell you...

"Out with the old,

in with the new...

Well, it had to happen. I should have realised when Big Dave suggested I should take a break last month that things were bound to change. And so they have. You see, my P45 has been handed to me, my desk cleared and my space in the mag's pages reduced to something less than nothing. Apparently, my endless whingeing has begun to grate and this (sob!) will be my last column.

I can't say it's been fun. Every month I've consistently tried to highlight the less desirable aspects of PC games, sometimes causing much gnashing of teeth and slamming of desks among the guilty parties. My past 12 issues have tried to make things — as I see them, at least — better for the good of gamesplaying in general.

So what has changed? In a word: nothing. Against my better judgment, the industry has hiked up minimum machine specifications and firmly camped in the sight marked 'CD-ROM'. Thus, you, the poor punter, has had to spend yet more hard-earned cash upgrading your machines, so that you can spend ages watching tedious pre-rendered sequences and move crosshairs around the screen.

The emergence of the 'Big Boys' — something that can only be a bad thing — has continued, with the large corporations swallowing up the talented developers, adding profits to the top of the list of priorities.

The 3D revolution is continuing — expect more sub-standard Doom clones over the next lifetime, then.

And, yes, much to the delight of spotty no-life saddies, the Internet has exploded and titles containing gratuitous sex still show no sign of abating.

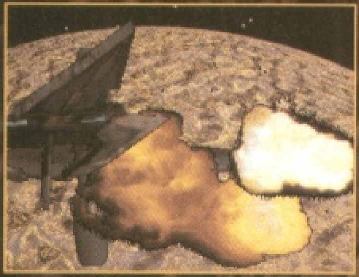
To be honest with you, I'm thinking of jacking in this PC lark and going back to the days of sitting in front of a wireless for relaxation. You may not remember this pastime, but I have been around for eternity and consequently have seen and done everything more than once.

It pains me, though. I remember when the computer games industry was driven by programmers with enthusiasm, optimism and the will to impress others with technical innovation. Now it seems cloning is the order of the day. When will software publishers realise that we only want one 3D shoot-'em-up, one driving game, and one huge RPG?

Whatever happens, I will continue to purchase PC GAMES and I look forward to watching the PC developments from a distance. Who knows? If something gets my back up then perhaps I'll put in a guest appearance.

Thundering engines. **Insane weapons.** **Maximum destruction.**

Terminal Velocity™



Fast texture mapped 3D flight with full 360 degree movement.

9 Planets and 27 levels to explore–with over 400,000 sq miles of terrain.

CD-ROM includes over 70Mb of cinematics

8 player network and 2 player modem support.

Non-stop air-to-air and air-to-ground realistic action and futuristic Comm-Bat™.

Professional music soundtrack and fully digitised sound effects.

SVGA support.

Kick some asteroid!

Note: The shareware version of **Terminal Velocity** is a subset of the full game and contains only 3 of the planets. The shareware CD-ROM version does include cinematics.

Available on IBM/PC and CD-ROM shareware from end June 1995. Available on IBM/PC and CD-ROM full version from early July 1995.

GAMESMASTER

"...the best airborne shoot-em-up to hit the shelves for a hell of a long time"

"93%" – JULY 1995

PC ZONE

"This, in my opinion is what Magic Carpet™ should have been."

– JULY 1995

TRI Terminal Reality Inc. FormGen Incorporated U.S. GOLD APOGEE 3D REALMS

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INFO BULLETS

❍ **With the commercial potential of the Internet still relatively untapped, MJN Technology has assured its place in the history books as it's the first PC manufacturer to sell its stuff in Cyberspace. Logging on to http://www.spend.com:81/mjn/will call up menus from which is it possible to buy MJN's stuff — provided, of course, you have someone else's credit card details to hand.**

❍ **Rumour has it that a Rocky Horror Show game is on the way. Dubbed a 'Rockumentary', this was reputedly doing the rounds at last month's Electronic Entertainment Expo, and will combine multimedia-style presentation with a solid game to boot. More (confirmed) news soon!**

❍ **Amstrad has announced that its PCs will shortly be shipped with full Plug & Play compatibility. This trendy euphemism means that PC idiots like us won't have to arse around installing software and the like. Hooray for that, then!**

❍ **There's a CD coming out in June that will play on your ordinary hi-fidelty system — and your PC! Provided you've got a CD-ROM drive, obviously. Plonking it into your computer will allow you to access all kinds of gumph about the band — a bunch of Herberts called Nyack — including videos and exclusive performances. For more info, whip out your modem and log on to http://www.echo.co.uk/echo/echo.html**

❍ **Silica has just announced the arrival of its Family PC — apparently it's so easy to use, your Dad could use it. Priced at £899 + VAT for a 486 DX4/100 mini-tower, or £1449 + VAT for a Pentium multimedia system, these computers are fully-upgradable and come with Silica's special brand of love. For more info, call Silica on: (0181) 308 1230.**

The Champ Is Back

It seems unbelievable now, but just over three years ago there were no computer saddies. Sure, there were spotty oiks who tinkered around in various dungeons and never spoke to girls, and there were others — equally spotty — that endlessly played strategy 'games'. But your average games-player still ventured out into the real world, even if it was only to replenish their supply of Oxy-10.

Oliver Collyer changed all that. For he was the person behind the socially-destructive Championship Manager.

In the past 1095 days, lives have been destroyed, relationships wrecked and jobs lost. We've even heard of a case — and this is completely true — of Mr. Sad from Sadsville (which is not his real name, obviously) who bought a computer purely for the purpose of playing Championship Manager.

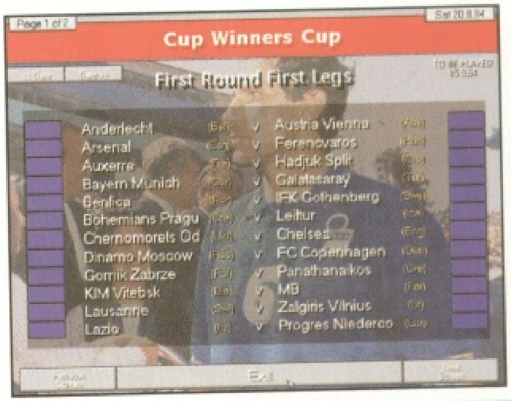
Since its original release many moons ago, there has been a huge number of Championship Manager variations — the Italian League, End of Season Data Disks, that kind of thing — but never a 'proper' sequel.

Domark has also just officially announced the long-rimoured existence of Championship Manager 2, and it has enough new features to make even the most anti-football management gamer moist.

Designed specifically for the PC, CM2 promises to be much, much faster than the original (which, it has to be said, tended to test the patience of football-loving saints everywhere). International management plays a major part in the game, so that you can now work your way up into the Premier League and beyond — possibly leading a National side into the World Cup.

Commentary will be provided by an as yet unnamed sports star, and the overall result is reputed to be just like watching the telly. Only telly that you control, obviously.

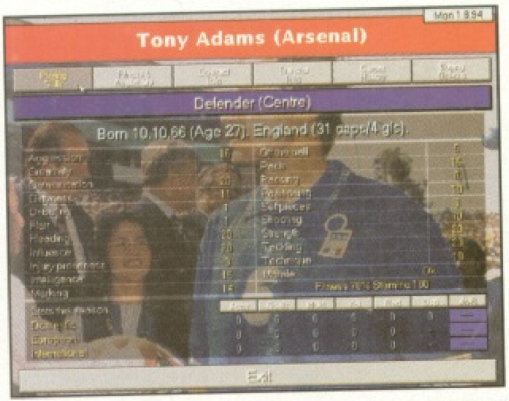
Championship Manager 2 (which will appear in super SVGA-O-Vision) will be released for CD-ROM and floppy in September. And — yes! — we'll have more news soon.



Cup Winners Cup

First Round First Legs

Anderlecht v Austria Vienna
Arsenal v Ferencvaros
Auxerre v Hadjuk Split
Bayern Munich v Galatasaray
Benfica v IFK Gothenberg
Bohemians Pragu v Leiftur
Chernomorets Od v Chelsea
Dinamo Moscow v FC Copenhagen
Gornik Zabrze v Panathanaikos
KIM Vitebsk v MB
Lausanne v Zalgiris Vilnius
Lazio v Progres Niederco



Tony Adams (Arsenal)

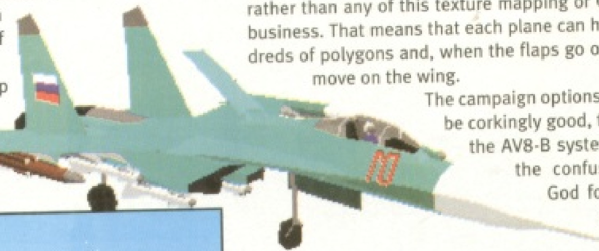
Defender (Centre)

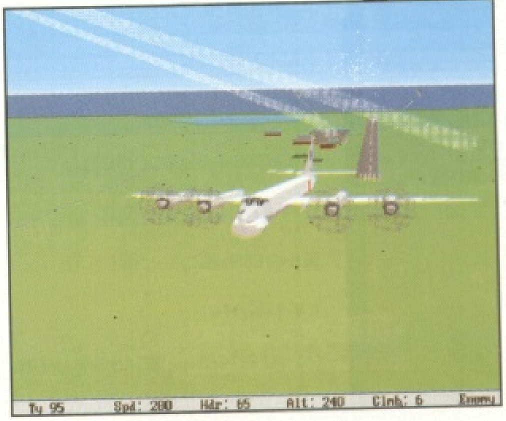
Born 10.10.66 (Age 27). England (31 caps/4 gls).

Russian Around

Mindscape gave a little sneak preview this month of a new flight sim that they're currently planning to launch in the Autumn. Called (snappily) SU-27, it puts you in the cockpit of the pride and joy of Russia's airforce, flying over the Crimean landscape against the forces of the Ukraine.

Not only is it politically bang up to date (well, at the time of writing, anyway — but you know how things change), but it's also guaranteed to be scorchingly realistic since the game's being designed in Russia with the help of some of the guys who helped build the real thing. It's in glorious SVGA, but goes heavy on masses of polygons rather than any of this texture mapping or Gouraud shading business. That means that each plane can have literally hundreds of polygons and, when the flaps go out, you *see* them move on the wing.





The campaign options also promises to be corkingly good, taking the best of the AV8-B system without any of the confusing bits (thank God for that!), and letting you set up missions against just about anybody with whatever support you fancy. Not only can you make a whole war up, but then you can fly your fighter safe in the knowledge that everybody else is acting intelligently around you. The computerised artificial intelligence is the other thing that the boys in Russia have been beefing up.

The question is, though, how does it move? Well, from the preview we had, it was as slick as a back-street in Siberia, and promises to fly without a major clunk factor even for owners of low-spec machines.

What with Mindscape committed to developing games on Windows 95, SU-27 will play just as well on the new system. So, if you're a flight sim buff and you upgrade your system, then at least you'll have one game that's guaranteed to work. Are we looking forward to it? Da, comrade, you betski!

BMG Splashes Out

BMG Interactive Entertainment has once again been dipping its vast corporate hands into its seemingly bottomless bag of cash. Not content with acquiring the distribution rights for the next batch of DMA Design releases a couple of months ago, the $4.1 billion entertainment arm of Bertelsmann AG has thrown squillions of pounds at NMS Software Ltd, the team currently beavering away on Virgin's Tilt. The deal covers NMS's next three titles which will be distributed world-wide by BMG.

"NMS is a forward-thinking team with the experience and ability to exploit technological advances," offers Ian Mathias, Product Director for BMG Interactive (UK). "When this capable collection of programming and production talent approached us, it was impossible to ignore them. This partnership further enhances our commitment to both gamesplayers and the development community to provide premium playability."

NMS is equally excited about the deal. "After all these years in the business it's refreshing to deal with a publisher like BMG," says NMS Director Richard Chappells (probably whilst counting his pots and pots of money). "They understand the needs of the developer and the gamesplayer, and they have the distribution muscle to make sure that we are seen and heard around the world — which suits us fine."

The next three NMS releases will all be written for the PC, with the first one scheduled for an Autumn release.

Incidentally, those who have been interested in computers since the halcyon days of the Spectrum and C64 will be interested to learn that BMG has 'bought' veteran whinger Gary Penn, who joins the company as producer. Since jacking in his job as Editor of our sister magazine The One years ago, his endless freelance rantings and slaggings have been the bane of bad software publishers everywhere. His industry knowledge should therefore ensure that BMG's future releases play well. Because, as Loadstar proved, it doesn't matter how much money you throw at a game — it's the playability that counts.

SUBWAY
SUBWAY
DOUBLE VALUE
TRIPLE VALUE
ROARING
USA
1
2
3
4
5

Virgin Washes Whiter

Virgin's 'not-budget' range, The White Label, will double in size this month with the addition of four hot new titles. Joining the line-up of Hand Of Fate, Lands Of Lore, IndyCar Racing and Conspiracy will be Overlord, SimCity Enhanced, Dune and Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space.

These games, which are all CD-ROM only, will cost between £9.99 and £12.99, representing tremendous value for money. And for once, it's good to see a software publisher putting out decent games at decent prices — not releasing any old tat and hoping it sells.

Virgin promises more quality White Label releases within the next couple of months, so we'll keep you posted with the latest developments.

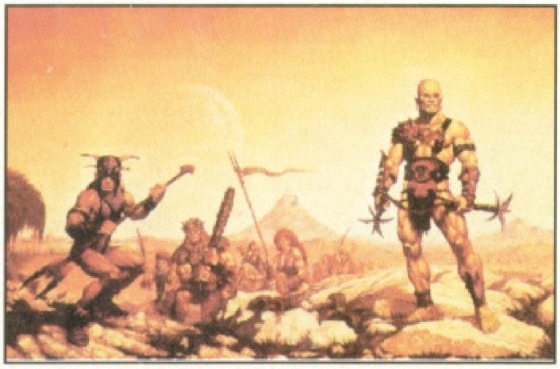
Riddle Me This...

Although PC screensavers are undoubtedly useful things for preventing image burn on your monitor, they do tend to highlight the fact that since your computer hasn't been used for a while, you are obviously not working.

However, thanks to Riddle Of The Runes: The Worlds Of TSR Screensaver (phew!), any bosses making snide comments can be told to bog off, as staring at the assorted images on offer can net you a cool £10,000 prize.

The program contains a selection of official TSR artwork. There are a number of different modes which vary from throwing up assorted themed images to providing mini quests, but the most interesting and profitable way of using the screensaver is in its special Riddle Master mode. In it, each piece of original fantasy art is set in a frame depicting a number of runes that, in conjunction with the images, provide the viewer with clues pointing to the secret location of hidden treasure.

Riddle Of The Runes: The Worlds Of TSR Screensaver will be available in June on both floppy and CD-ROM.



Stone The Crows

Licence king Acclaim has snapped up the rights to the sequel to last year's moody action flick, The Crow. Notable for the fact that the lead star, Brandon Lee, died on-set in a freak shooting accident, this motion picture raked in over $100 million dollars, making a sequel inevitable, if a little difficult, thanks to the untimely departure of its male lead.

The Crow: City Of Angels, as the film will be called sees international film star Vincent Perez stepping into Lee's shoes, reprising the role of a nice guy shot dead buy nasty men and brought back to life buy a mysterious crow.

The game promises to draw heavily from its film parent, thanks mainly to the unique fact that it is being developed in tandem with the actual movie, right from storyboard stage.

The Crow: City of Angels will be the first release under an alliance between Acclaim and the Edward R. Pressman Film Corporation, which gives the mega publisher rights to all the corporation's future films.

Miles Mogulescu, Executive Vice President and CEO of Content, Inc., the new media subsidary of the Edward R. Pressman Corporation, is excited by the project: "The film producers and interactive designers will closely collaborate to create a game which is true to the unique Gothic spirit of The Crow," he enthuses.

"We are extremely excited to unveil The Crow: City of Angels as our Acclaim/Pressman interactive premiere," continues Robert Holmes, President of Acclaim. "We look forward to working side by side with the talented people at Pressman and Content, Inc. to create compelling games that are true to the excitement, intrigue and mystery of the property."

No firm release date has been set, but it is unlikely we'll see the fruits of Acclaim's labour until the end of the year, when the film is due to be released.

A Phoenix From The Flames

While the year-long troubles that plagued Amiga manufacturer Commodore may have resulted in so-so news for our sister publications The One and CU Amiga, its new parent company, Escom, has decided to reinvest in the PC market.

At a recent press conference in Germany, General Manager of Amiga Technologies Petro Tyschtschenko announced that Commodore Pentium PCs will be available from August this year. No price details have been announced, but it is understood that these machines will come fully-loaded with software and that there will be two models: P75s and P100s.

As some of you may remember, Commodore did try and crack the PC market a few years ago, but the general opinion of its machines was that they were far too clunky and difficult to install with new hardware.

That said, this is a totally new Commodore, so its track record should be put firmly in the past. And who knows — if we can blag any machines in the Summer, we may well be able to give you the full lowdown on how they shape up.

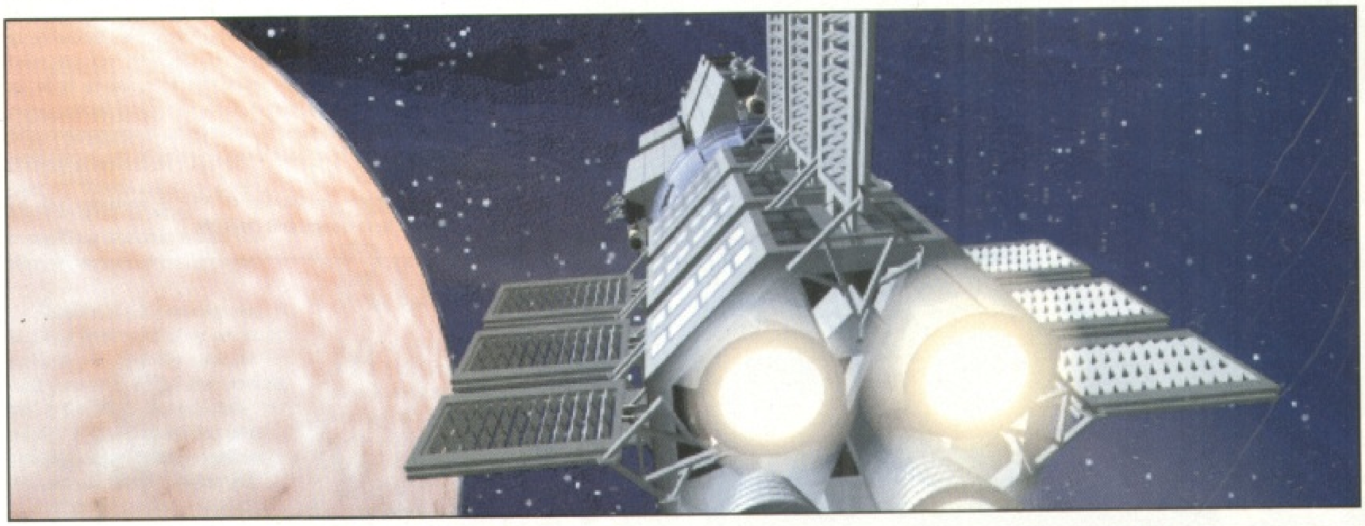
Virgin Goes Legendary

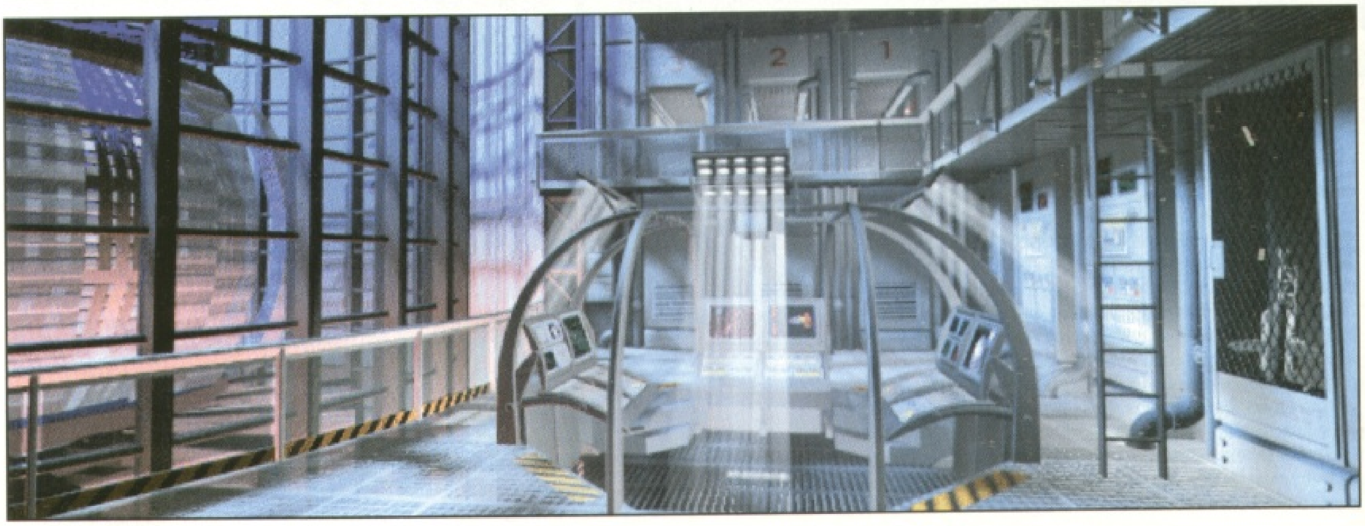
In yet more splashing of cash, Virgin Interactive Entertainment has announced that it has sole European rights to all things Legend — that is, every future title to emerge from the award-winning US developer.

The first fruits of the new relationship can be seen this Autumn, when Legend's Mission Critical hits the shelves. The game stars Hollywood's Michael Dorn from out of Star Trek: The Next Generation and Patricia Charbonneau from out of, er... Robocop II, and is a "powerful deep space adventure packed with realistic space combat, credible futuristic technology and astonishing alien creatures".

Early preview demos suggest that the game has managed to capture the claustrophobic feeling of deep space, and the pre-rendered visuals certainly look nice. However, little gameplay has been seen, so we can't possibly comment on that.

Later on in the year, we can expect a role-playing game based around the Shannara novels, the world's most popular series of fantasy books. Legend's multimedia adventure promises to feature an all-new storyline drawing on the history of the Shannara world, with 3D modelled characters, digitised audio and spectacular animated sequences.





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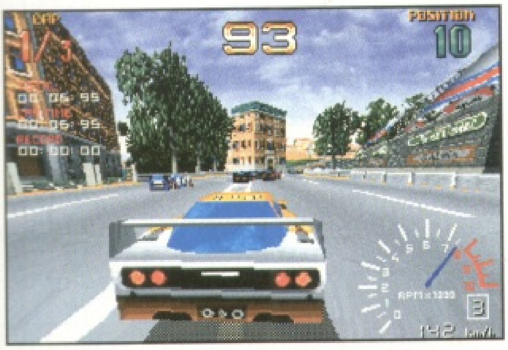
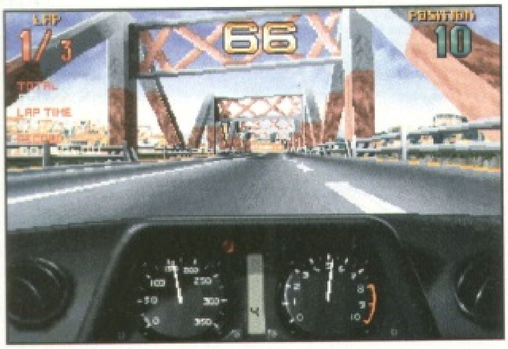
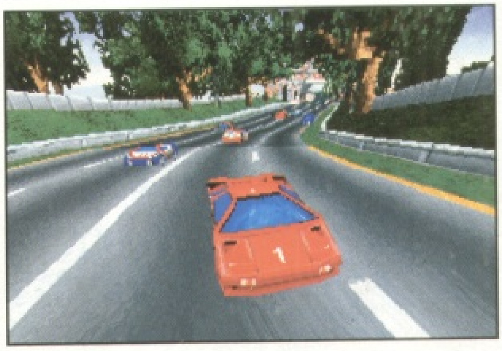


One of Virgin's hot unveilings at E^3 was Screamer, a Ridge Racer clone developed by Graffiti Software. The game is still a long way off (a release date of November is likely), but a new version has just been show to PC GAMES, and we thought you'd like to see how it's coming on.

However, to describe the game as a Ridge Racer clone is a little unfair as the finished game will feature five times as many tracks, plus a secret course that will remain hidden until the player figures out how to activate it. You'll be able to choose from eight different cars, and — yes! — eight people will be able to race each other via a network.

The early version shown at E^3 got jaws a-dropping, and we'll be taking a more in-depth peek at this ace racer in a couple of months.





Klik & Play Away!

ONLY £4.99
4 of the FASTEST games for Windows you've ever played!
Europress
Klik & Play gamepack

Europress Software is releasing the first set of Klik & Play-originated games this month. Priced at one pee less than a fiver, the quartet — dubbed: 'the fastest games for Windows you've ever played' — come complete with a Klik & Play demo, so you can see for yourselves how easy it is to write another Wing Commander 3 or Flight Unlimited. (Well, maybe.)

We haven't seen these games, so it's impossible to say whether or not it's worth splashing out on this pack, but we reckon it may be useful reference for Klik & Play users as each game can be imported into the package and its innards examined.

Yawn!

Although some anoraks find hardware a turn-on, here at PC GAMES we find them positively yawn-inducing — unless, of course, they look vaguely phallic. And as none of our love pythons look like SNES joypads, the latest control devices to come from Technoplus sent us all to sleep.

For the record, they come colour-coordinated to the IBM PC (in other words read: 'grey'), have an extra long cable "for maximum convenience" and arrive in a secure carry case.

But perhaps the best news for us technically-lacking gamesters is the fact that you don't have to configure the PC Gamepacks — just plug 'em in and play. Priced at £24.99 and £12.99 respectively, the PC Gamepack and PC Control Pad are in the shops now.

TECNO PLUS
PC CONTROL PAD
TECNO PLUS
PC GAME PACK

CHARTS

Top 10 PC Games

1. **Ultimate Soccer Manager**
Impressions
2. **Magic Carpet**
Electronic Arts
3. **Premier Manager 3**
Gremlin Interactive
4. **Sim Tower**
Maxis
5. **Flight Of The Amazon Queen**
Renegade
6. **Transport Tycoon Editor**
MicroProse
7. **Discworld**
Psygnosis
8. **Super SF2 Turbo**
GameTek
9. **Aladdin**
VIE
10. **Rise Of The Triad**
US Gold

Top 10 CD-ROM Games

1. **Full Throttle**
LucasArts
2. **Flight Unlimited**
VIE
3. **Discworld**
Psygnosis
4. **Virtual Pool**
Interplay
5. **Civil War**
Empire
6. **Slipstream 5000**
Gremlin
7. **Dark Forces**
LucasArts
8. **X-Wing Collector's CD**
LucasArts
9. **Sim Tower**
Maxis
10. **Lost Eden**
VIE

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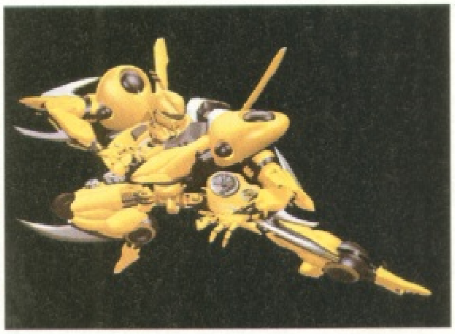
MARIE LAWLOR

previews

Once again we take a look at the cream of the new releases due to appear over the next few months — and realise that PC gaming has never been so good.



DIABLO
SAURON

Rise 2: Resurrection..22

While Rise Of The Robots will go down in the annals of history as one of the most hyped yet disappointing games ever, Mirage is confident that the vastly improved Rise 2: Resurrection will snatch the beat-'em-up crown from Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo. Alex Simmons climbed into the ring to see how Mirage's up-and-coming champion is shaping up.

The Last Dynasty..26

Stepping onto the well-trodden road leading to gratuitous FMV, Sierra mixes elements of Wing Commander and Lost Eden and ends up with an explosive cocktail called The Last Dynasty. David Upchurch wonders whether this could be the game to unseat Origin's space epic.

Space Quest 6: The Spinal Frontier......28

Roger Wilco returns to the small screen in the latest and also the first ever full-talkie Space Quest game. Has Sierra's newie got the balls to last the full ten rounds with LucasArts, or will it slump to the canvas in the first round? Alex Simmons reckons it'll easily last the distance.

SCi-ence Fiction..30

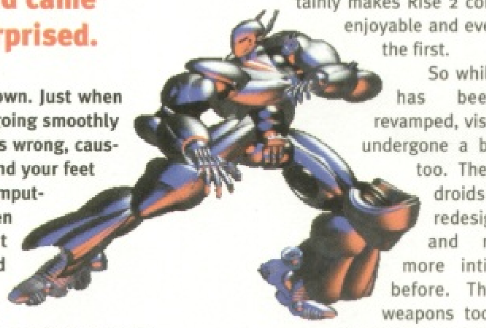
Okay, so SCi's last couple of games have been turkeys, but PC GAMES was eager to give them the benefit of the doubt when we visited their Southampton HQ. Luckily for us, SCi's '95 new releases didn't disappoint, with the spectacular blaster XS headlining their line-up, in which 60 futuristic gladiators battle for cash in vast texture-mapped arenas. Also revealed for the first time was Gender Wars, a Syndicate-style battle of the sexes in which the blokes fight it out against the birds! Lastly we saw Kingdom 'O Magic, a Discworld-y adventure with loads of unique twists and rendered graphics. Sounds impressive? David Upchurch certainly thinks so.

Primal Rage..34

With a torrent of high-quality beat-'em-ups like Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo and FX Fighters currently flooding the PC market, is there really room for another? Alex Simmons thinks so, especially if they're as impressive and indeed as unique as Time Warner Interactive's prehistoric punch-fest.

RISE 2 RESURRECTION

Let's face it, the original Rise Of The Robots was pretty appalling. Well, Mirage are back — and this time it reckons it's got it right. Not content with taking their word for it, Alex Simmons checked out the super-sequel and came away pleasantly surprised.



Life can be one big let-down. Just when everything seems to be going smoothly something suddenly goes wrong, causing your world crash round your feet once more. It's the same with computer games. At first glance they often look absolutely stunning, but when you actually sit down and play the damn things they're massively disappointing. The original Rise Of The Robots was a prime example; visually it was unparalleled, but the gameplay was neglected as a result. With Rise 2: Resurrection, everything is going to change.

No matter how unplayable the first Rise Of The Robots was, there's no denying that Mirage marketed the game perfectly, so much so that it was released on a staggering 13 different formats and has sold well over a million copies world-wide! Mirage are hoping to top that figure with Rise 2 though, an infinitely more playable attempt at cracking the beat-'em-up genre.

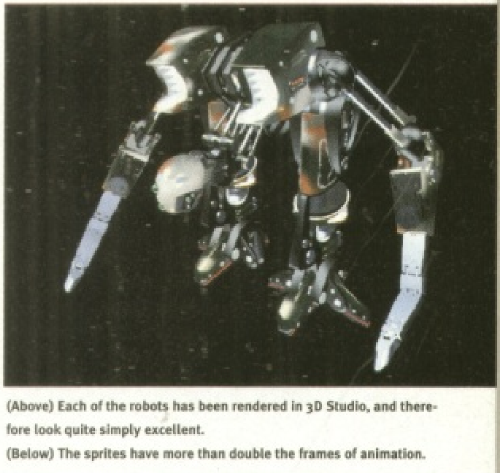
For the second game, Mirage returned to the drawing board to design the game almost entirely from scratch. Obviously the high visual quality needed to be maintained, but at the same time the game engine had to radically enhanced too. The development team therefore looked towards the arcade version of Rise Of The Robots for inspiration, incorporating ideas from the coin-op into the all-new sequel.

It was plainly obvious that the control system needed to be changed, so for Rise 2 Mirage have opted for a much simpler (and more instinctive) system. Originally a power bar determined the strength of each hit, holding down the punch button for harder attacks. All that has changed, and now there are two punch buttons and two kick buttons — one performs a quick jab while the other strikes out with more force, although it takes slightly longer to recover. This makes the gameplay flow more fluidly, a definite step in the right direction as I'm sure you'll agree.

What also helps is that the robots are now far more agile than before. Rather than being limited to walking along the ground and always attacking from the same direction, the robots can now jump over their opponents and attack from behind. While this isn't a breakthrough in the beat-'em-up genre (just check out Street Fighter II or Mortal Kombat, for example), it certainly makes Rise 2 considerably more enjoyable and even intuitive than the first.

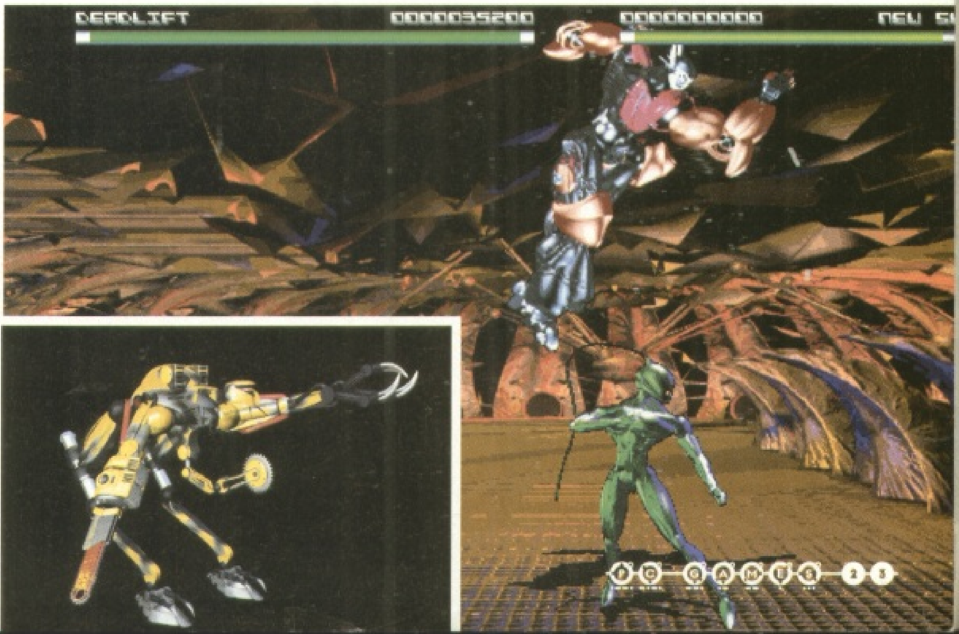
So while the gameplay has been drastically revamped, visually Rise 2 has undergone a bit of a face-lift too. The original seven droids have all been redesigned, beefed up and made visually more intimidating than before. They now carry weapons too. For example, the Crusher droid is now equipped with a buzz-saw that extends from its chest cavity, while Prime-8, the ape-like 'bot from the first game,

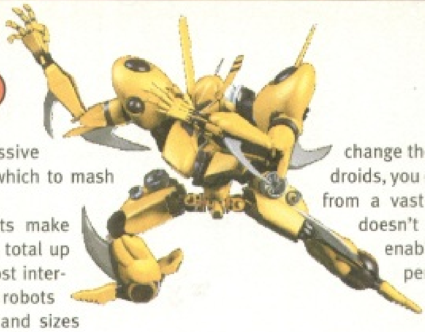
GAME	RISE 2: RESURRECTION
PUBLISHER	MIRAGE
DEVELOPER	IN-HOUSE
WORK *STARTED*	AUTUMN 1994
DUE FOR *COMPLETION*	AUTUMN 1995



(Above) Each of the robots has been rendered in 3D Studio, and therefore look quite simply excellent.

(Below) The sprites have more than double the frames of animation.





now carries a massive hydraulic hammer with which to mash his opponents to a pulp!

A load of new robots make their debut, bringing the total up to 18. One of Rise 2's most interesting features is that the robots are all different shapes and sizes rather than standard-sized humanoid characters, and the new fighters demonstrate this perfectly. The Fatbot is, as his name suggests, enormous, and crushes his enemy with sheer brute force rather than relying on agility. Then there's the Zyster, a Samurai-style warrior who carries a huge sword and is also kitted out with a cape made of tough metal plates, allowing him to slice his opponent with the razor-sharp edges as he spins his cape out in a fan.

Other killer attacks include fire-spitting flame swords and devastating missile launchers, as well as a host of non-graphical special moves. These include tractor beams that drag your opponent closer and even temporary invisibility, but many of these have to be earned as you progress through the game. While all the fighters begin with approximately 20 attacks and moves, additional combos must be earned and therefore only appear later in the game.

In addition to the basic line-up of fighters, there is also the option to 'modify' the robots using the game's in-built editor. Although you can't actually change the moves or physical shape of the droids, you can alter their colour by picking a from a vast palette of shades. While this doesn't affect the game in any way, it enables players to create their own personal robot with which to fight.

The character animation is another area in which Mirage concentrated. In the first game each robot moved with just a 100 frames of animation, while in Rise 2 it's been boosted to around 250! The result is quite literally gobsmacking, as now the fighters jump, attack and block with impressive grace. You can lower the frame rate for lower-spec machines though, so you'll be able to enjoy Rise 2 even on a 33MHz 486.

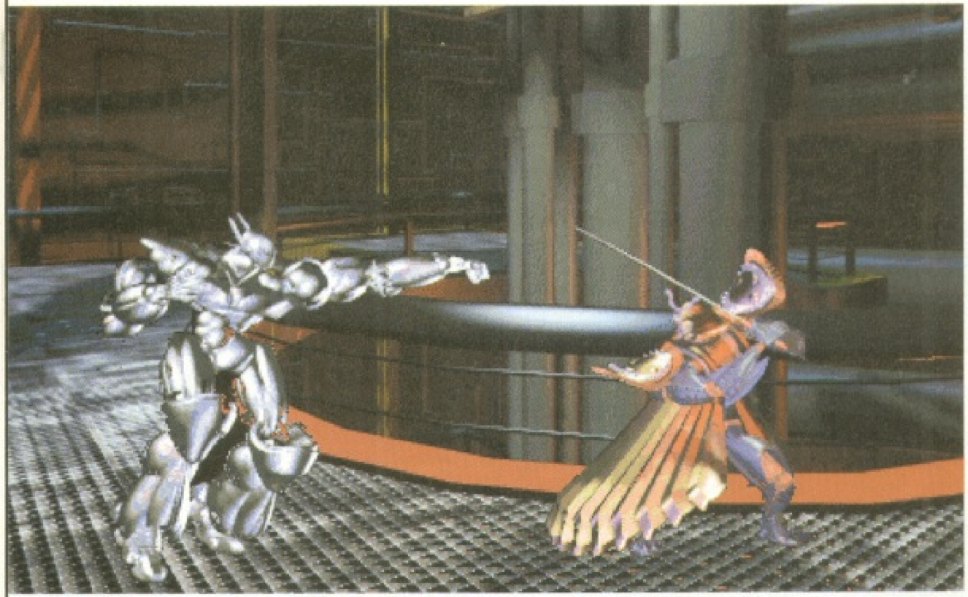
It's not just the robots that have been graphically enhanced either, as the backgrounds have also been treated to a fresh lick of paint. The original seven scenes have undergone serious changes, while there are six new backgrounds to fight against. All of these have been beautifully rendered in SVGA, and some are even animated. Examples of this are the cargo bay in which huge crates are precariously stacked at the back of the room. When a robot is slammed against the floor, the boxes teeter on the edge before crashing to the ground! Each of the scenes feature parallax scrolling too, so it may come as a surprise to know that Rise 2 will run at a admirable 25 frames second even with the detail level cranked right up!

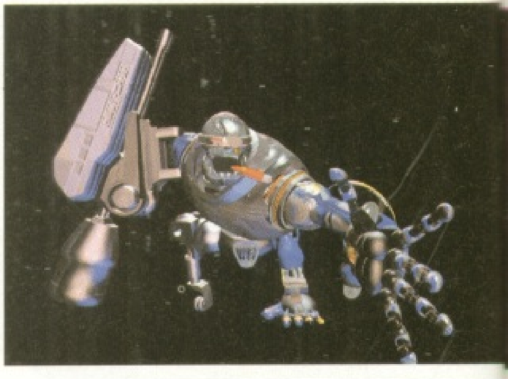
Impossible Mission

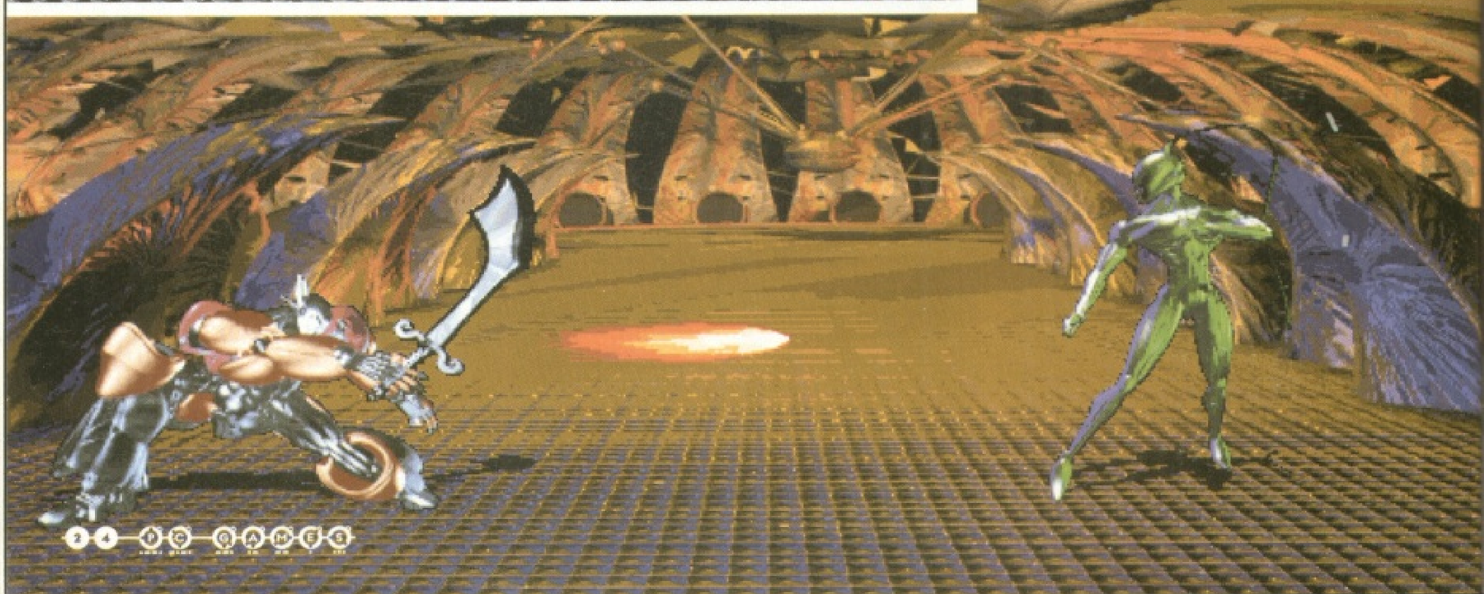
Rise 2 follows on directly from the original game. It seems that even though the Cyborg managed to defeat the Supervisor, this only helped to contain the chaotic situation rather than eliminate it completely. Therefore another droid has been drafted in to rectify the problem, although since the first mission the Supervisor has been preparing from your imminent arrival...

Controlling the robot production factory located at the heart of the Electrocorp Tower, the Supervisor has created an army of robot guards and combat droids with which to protect the building from invasion. Along with entirely new robots, existing droids have be modified into pure fighting machines, and now carry huge missile launchers, knives and even flame throwers!

And you? Well, you've changed too. For starters you're not the same thin-limbed cyborg. You're now a pumped-up battle 'bot from hell, with a load of new moves under his belt. Alternatively you can fight using any of the droids — it's up to you. Whichever one you choose though, don't even think for a second that defeating the Supervisor is going to be easy, because this time she's ready and waiting for you.







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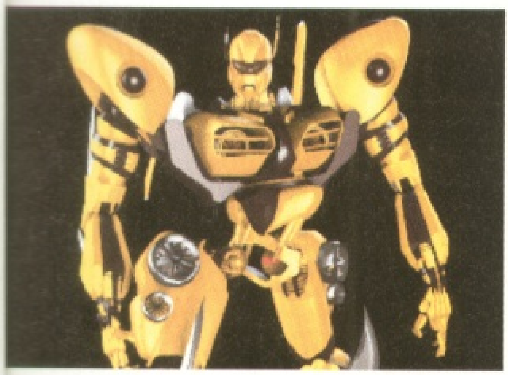
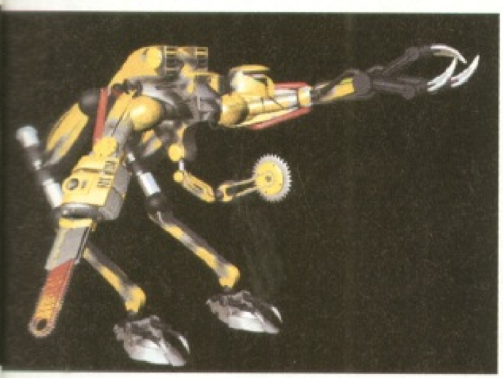
(Above) A load of new rendered SVGA backdrops have been introduced in Rise 2, including numerous scenes with animations running in the background.

(Below) The existing robots have been beefed up and now carry an assortment of weapons, including flames throwers and missiles!





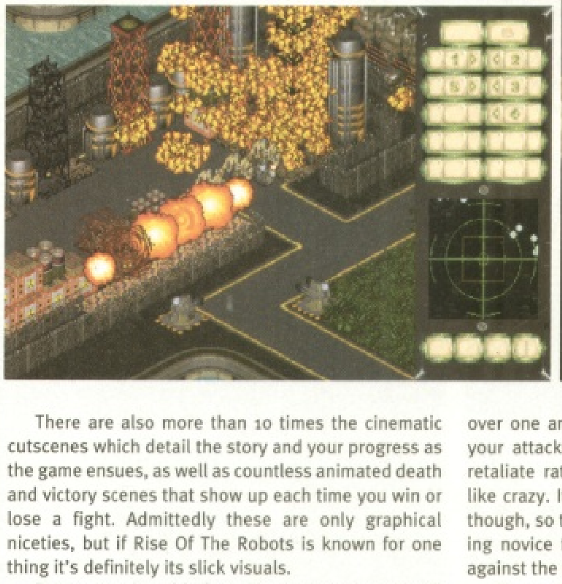
The Adrenalin(e) Factor

As well as Rise Of The Robots 2, Mirage is also busy working on a Syndicate-style action game due for release nearer the end of the year. Again the game will feature glossy rendered robots battling it out to the death, but this time you're given a whole squad of the buggers, and now they're armed with chain guns, lasers and missile launchers!

Set in the 21st Century, the world has been infested by vicious BioMechs, genetic creatures built specifically for military use. As one of the few remaining humans on the planet, you've got just a handful of loyal robots to lead the onslaught against the BioMechs, controlling them from the relative safety of your underground HQ. Controlled either individually or as a team, the robots possess advanced artificial intelligence that allows them to automatically engage the enemy, although at any time you can take over and taste the blood-spilling action for yourself.

One of The Adrenalin(e) Factor's most unique features is that the world in which the game is set is extremely realistic in that the whole entire background is animated, is extremely detailed and *everything* can be destroyed. Therefore if you want to just wander around shooting everything in sight, go for it!

Created using Mirage's specially-designed game editor, The Adrenalin(e) Factor promises to be far more action-packed than Syndicate yet still as absorbing and addictive as Bullfrog's strategy blaster. Visually it's very stylish indeed, combining smart SVGA isometric-3D graphics with slick rendered cinematic sequences. Whether the gameplay manages to match the polished presentation remains to be seen, but let's just say that at the moment Mirage are justifiably confident.



There are also more than 10 times the cinematic cutscenes which detail the story and your progress as the game ensues, as well as countless animated death and victory scenes that show up each time you win or lose a fight. Admittedly these are only graphical niceties, but if Rise Of The Robots is known for one thing it's definitely its slick visuals.

But as mentioned before, Rise 2: Resurrection will not be just another cosmetically astounding slideshow. As well as re-working the control system, the robots' artificial intelligence has been carefully restructured too. One of the many criticisms aimed at the first Rise Of The Robots was that a few of the enemy fighters could be defeated simply by finding the correct move and repeatedly using it. This obviously took the challenge out of the fight, and made a bad game even worse.

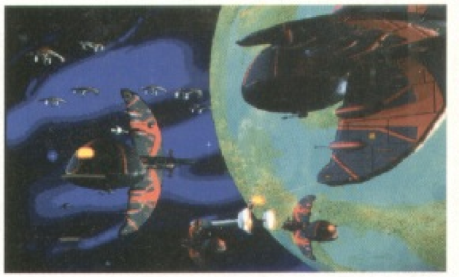
AI programmer Andy Clarke has learned from the mistakes of the first game and has rectified the problem, taking out errors that made it possible to win fights using just a single attack. This was made somewhat easier due to the fact the robots can now jump over one another, although now the enemy react to your attacks more subtly than before and carefully retaliate rather than charging in, throwing punches like crazy. It's all too easy to make a game too hard though, so the gradual learning curve remains, allowing novice fighters to learn the basic combat skills against the relatively easy initial opponents.

Then, of course, there's the sound. 'Legendary' Queen axeman Brian May laid down tracks for the first game, so it comes as no surprise that he returns for the sequel, and has even written the title track, 'Resurrection'. There's also the song 'Cyborg', which was originally recorded for the original game but never made it to the final version. Mirage are hoping to include it in Rise 2, and there are even plans to release it as a single.

Still, you won't hear or indeed see anything on Rise 2: Resurrection until the game is released in the Autumn. What's more, the hype has only just begun, so by the time you see Mirage's super-sequel first-hand it'll no doubt be hyped beyond belief. Let's just hope it's worth it this time, eh?

Star Struck

Interactive movies alone don't work, but Sierra isn't taking any risks with its latest epic. Just how far will $2 million get you these days, asks Dave Upchurch, as he joins the race for space.



GAME	THE LAST DYNASTY
PUBLISHER	SIERRA
DEVELOPER	IN-HOUSE
WORK *STARTED*	SUMMER 1993
DUE FOR *COMPLETION*	JUNE 1995

The Last Dynasty is packed with beautiful pre-rendered images, and stacks of quality FMV — and our sensors have detected gameplay too!

Two years is one hell of a long time in computer games. A little over two years ago, PC gamesplayers were enjoying the delights of Sam 'n' Max, Tornado, and — most relevant to this preview — 7th Guest. Virgin's first break into interactive movies was groundbreaking, for the time, but all too quickly people discovered the limitations placed on the game by stunning, pre-rendered graphics.

Also two years ago, Sierra began work on its biggest, most expensive game to date: The Last Dynasty. Costing over two million dollars to produce, the company is understandably bullish about the 'state of the art technology' used in its creation. Like 7th Guest, Last Dynasty takes up two CDs, packed to the bits with full-motion video, but promises a lot more gaming action.

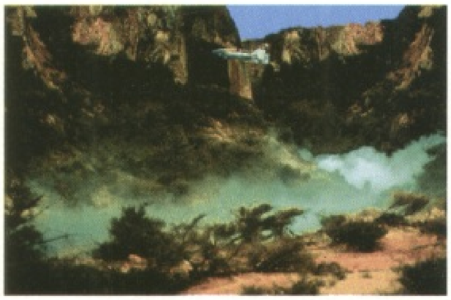
Using a mix of high-resolution video and full-screen 3D rendered graphics, Dynasty is described as a "space odyssey", which doesn't bode well for old Johnny Gameplay. Creating the video took over three months; with two months of casting, costume designing and story-boarding, followed by a full 30 days of shooting. Voice actors were then employed for dubbing, taking a further week — and then the whole shebang was plopped onto CD.

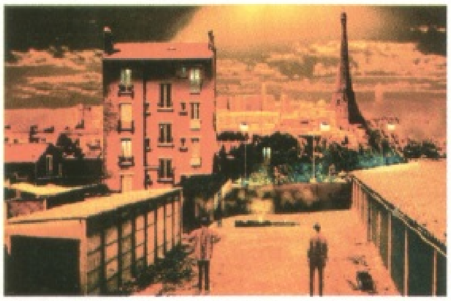
But, as promised, quivering amongst all these hi-tech cinematics is a game. Two, in fact. The Last Dynasty's Wing Commander-style combat simulator enables you to play as a young would-be hero, joining forces with a bunch of dirty but honourable space pirates to defy an evil tyrant, the somewhat arsely-named Lord Iron. Joined by your friend, Dok, the story's climax involves the destruction "once and for all of the usurpers of the Dynasty's biggest gift: the Universal Knowledge." Hmmm.

This stage of The Last Dynasty boasts a modular control system; which has a typical flight sim-style display, but gives you full control over your cockpit instruments. With the big bag of statistical information at hand — percentages, tables, and reams and reams of figures — the designers have made the dials and knobs into moveable windows, which can be turned off completely. This means the important stuff, like maps, fuel gauges and radar displays, can be switched on, while other less immediate information sits in the background, available quickly at the touch of a single button.

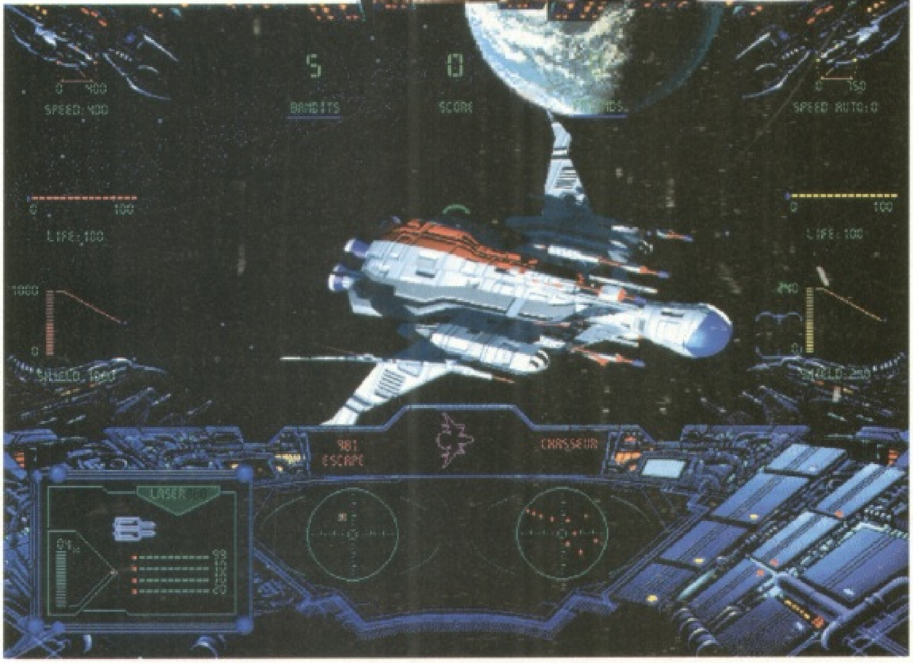
And yet the gameplay doesn't stop there. In-between the space combat and the FMV sits a nice little adventure section, exploring a space station which Sierra claims to be the biggest ever seen in a computer game. The huge, pre-rendered model is viewed from inside, Doom-style, but again uses FMV to show movement. As you run between locations, the graphics are pulled directly from CD giving realistic views, with gameplay coming from adventure elements — shooting enemies, finding clues and avoiding detection.

Early previews of The Last Dynasty look promising, but we'll have to wait until Sierra cram all of that goodness into the two-disc package to find out for sure. Currently marked for release in August, we'll bring you a full review soon.





(Right) The Wing Commander-style combat sections have a customisable HUD, so you can move your controls where you need them most.



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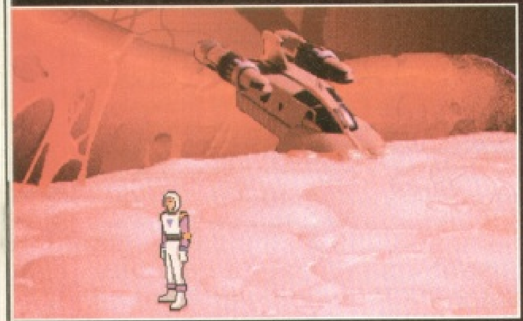
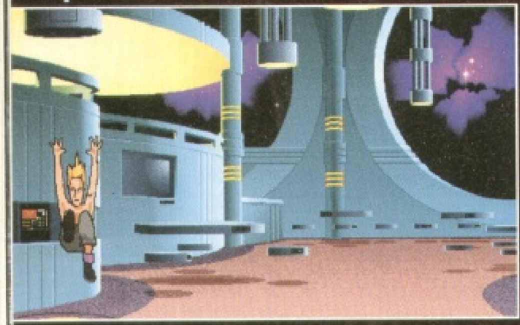
PC GAMES

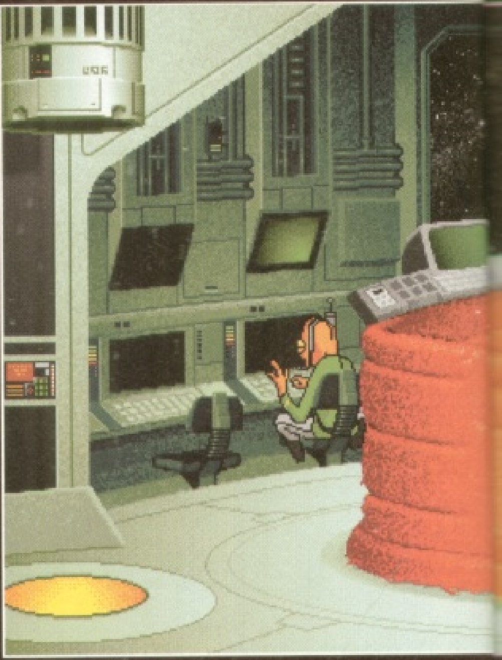
Knocked

Long-term Space Quest fan and veteran graphic adventurer Alex Simmons jets off into deep space to check out Roger Wilco's latest bumbling episode, The Spinal Frontier.

GAME	SPACE QUEST 6: THE SPINAL FRONTIER
PUBLISHER	SIERRA
DEVELOPER	SCOTT MURPHY & MARK CROWE
WORK *STARTED*	SPRING 1994
DUE FOR *COMPLETION*	AUGUST 1995

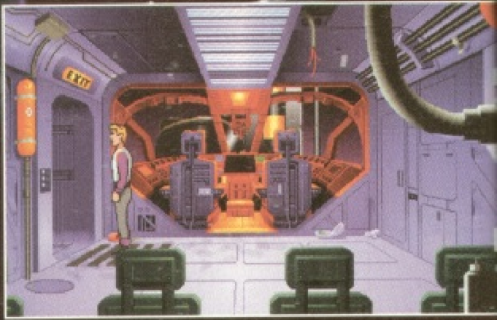






Roger's back as janitor, having been demoted from Captain after fouling up his last mission in Space Quest 5. Within seconds aliens turn the crew of Deepship 86 into lemon sorbet — can Rog rescue his buddies and regain his stripes?

DEEPSHIP 86



Back in the days when the Amiga and Atari ST ruled the home computer market, Sierra were arguably the graphic adventure kings. With titles like Leisure Suit Larry and the King's Quest series under its belt, nothing could even come close to the brilliantly challenging and supremely absorbing adventures they consistently released. That is until LucasArts unleashed The Secret Of Monkey Island. Since then both companies have been battling it out for supremacy, with LucasArts having the slight edge. Now, judging by Sierra's latest adventure, all that is about to change.

It has been almost 10 years since Space Quest star Roger Wilco was conceived, spawned from the creative juices of Sierra veterans Scott Murphy and Mark Crowe. Since then the bumbling space janitor has saved the world from intergalactic space encyclopaedia salesmen, thwarted the megalomanical plans of Sludge Vohaul and even defeated the merciless Pirates of Pestulon.

But for this, Roger's sixth Space Quest adventure (subtitled The Spinal Frontier), he's returned to what he does best — cleaning! Having been demoted from Captain after stumbling through the last game he's back as a janitor, serving on the space exploration vessel Deepship 86.

It's while Roger out performing his daily duties, scrubbing the ship's windscreen (haven't they heard of wipers in the 24th Century?), when the what should have been a routine mission runs into a spot of trouble. Ensnared in a powerful tractor beam, the ship is boarded aliens, who promptly turn the crew in tiny scoops of lemon sorbet! All except for Rog that is, who's left to watch helplessly as his colleague are mercilessly 'iced'.

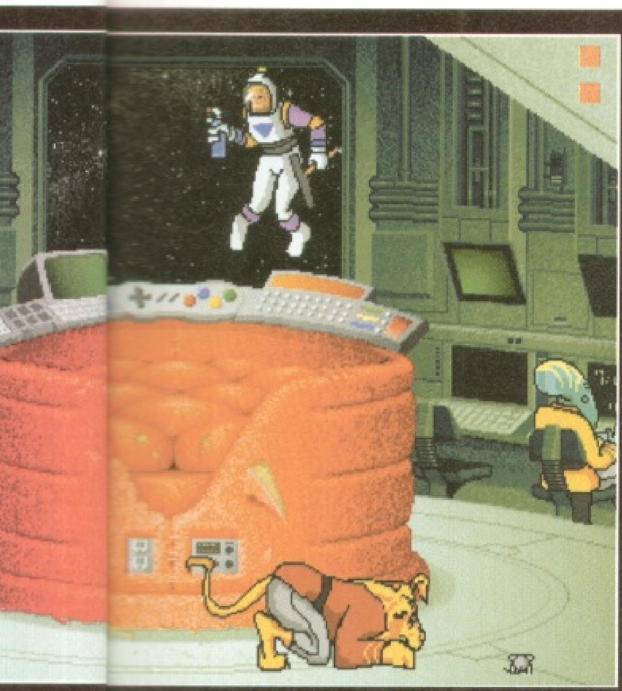
From here on in it's thinking caps on and laughing gear in overdrive, because like the previous five Space Quest games The Spinal Frontier mixes hard-core graphic adventuring with more gags than a masochist's bedside cabinet. Just heed this warning though — if you've never played any of the Space Quest games before, prepare yourself for some of the corniest jokes ever!

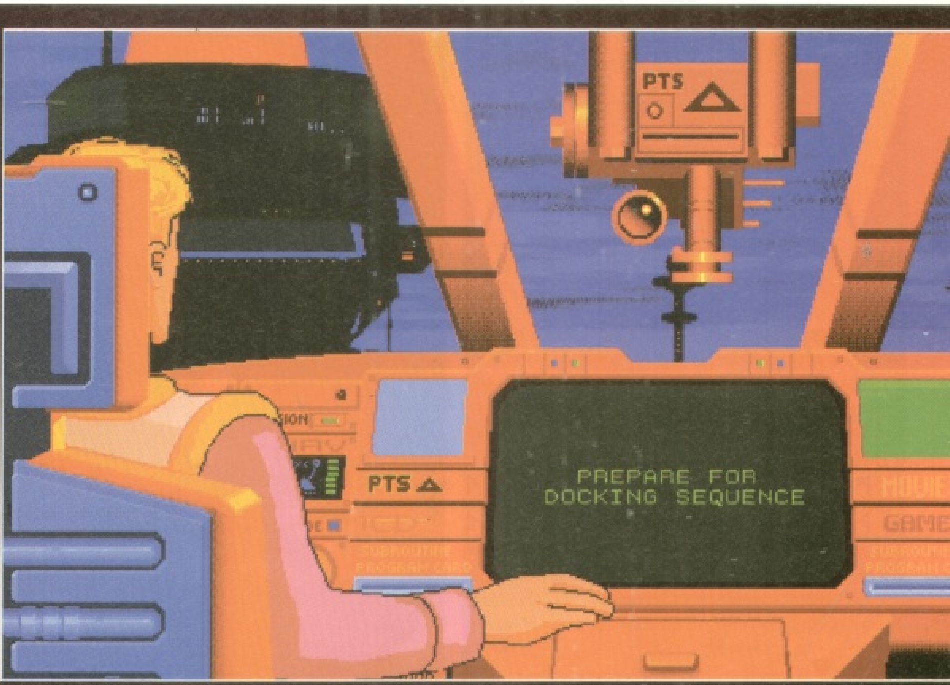
Compared to its forefathers, Space Quest 6 is quite literally a mammoth project, not just because of the vastness of the game but because it boasts a development team of some 40 or so programmers and designers, many of whom have worked on other Sierra graphic adventures, like Freddy Pharkas for example.

Since work started on the game, the team has been toying with various ideas and styles for the game's graphics, before settling on a CD-only beast with slick SVGA graphics, lavish sound and an absorbing plot, much in the same vein as the highly-acclaimed King's Quest VII.

It's more of a comedy adventure rather than a fairytale though, and the story goes something like this. Having defeated the aliens on Deepship 86, Rog falls for fellow Corpsman (or is that Corpswoman?) Stellar Santiago. Together they're in heaven, scooting around the ship arm-in-arm, cleaning out the trash cans and mopping the grimy floors.

d For Six!





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All is peachy until the object of his affections falls foul to a deadly mind-altering experiment which basically turns his hip-swaying girlie into a dribbling, drooling vegetable. Can the courageous cleaner save his sweetheart before her brain is mushed to a pulp? Let's hope so!

But how? Well, like Donald Pleasance and Dennis Quaid before him, Roger is shrunk to microscopic size and then injected inside his beloved's body. Could this be the first time ol' Rog has been inside a woman? Maybe — but our jovial janitor is not here for a good time, and it's down to him to surf Santiago's bloodstream and clean up the virus with his SupaMop™.

Along with it's radically different storyline (the other SQ games were mainly set in space), The Spinal Frontier is also a vast improvement in terms of presentation. For starters, this is the first Space Quest talkie game, so for the very first time Roger actually speaks! No longer will Boy Blunder remain silent, because now his nerdish voice blasts through the speakers — in three different languages!

Graphically the game's had a major overhaul too, and combines computer rendered graphics with hand-drawn artwork, all depicted in glorious SVGA. The result is quite excellent, the defined backdrops being both bright, varied and colourful. Roger himself has had a bit of a face lift, and is now smarter (well, he looks smarter at least!), is fluidly animated and now looks like a fully-fledged cartoon character rather than a fuzzy digitised actor. In fact, the whole game is reminiscent of a cartoon, thanks to the bold use of colour and the superb digitised speech featured throughout.

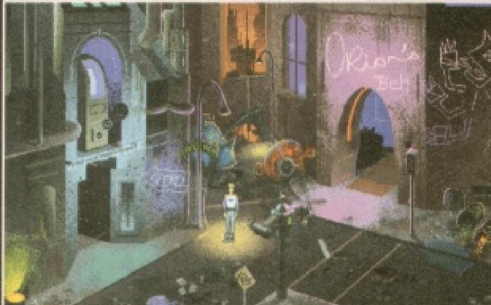
It's not just the game's cosmetics that have changed either. The user-interface is now very different, although experienced graphic adventurers and novice gamers will undoubtedly find the system both functional and easy to use. A bank of action icons line the bottom of the screen, enabling Roger to walk, talk, pick up and use, so to perform an action you simply select the appropriate icon then click on the object you want to interact with. Unlike the latest LucasArts adventures and indeed King's Quest VII, Space Quest 6 doesn't use an intelligent cursor which makes the game considerably more difficult, so don't expect to traverse the entire galaxy (and Santiago's intestines) in a matter of hours!

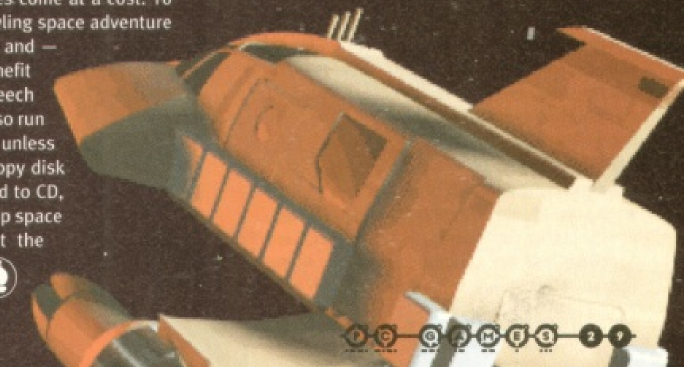
As you've probably gathered, Space Quest 6 will be cram-packed with jokes and humour, and even mocks classic science fiction flicks like Aliens and Star Wars. What's more, SQ6 even takes the mickey out of countless computer games, featuring an excellent beat-'em-up sub-game amusingly titled Stooge Fighter III! Also look out for hundreds of cameo appearances from countless sci-fi characters, people and cliches throughout.

But sadly all of these features come at a cost. To get the most from Sierra's sprawling space adventure you'll need *at least* an 8Mb 486, and — *of course* — a CD-ROM to benefit from the game's excellent speech and sound. Space Quest 6 will also run in both DOS and Windows, so unless you're one of these die-hard floppy disk gamers who *still* hasn't upgraded to CD, you'll be ready to rocket into deep space when the game is released at the very beginning of August. Personally I can't wait.

(Above) Even though Roger is a meagre cleaning boy, he's still got the flash flying skills that got him through the academy. Mind you, it's still safer to leave the ship on autopilot!

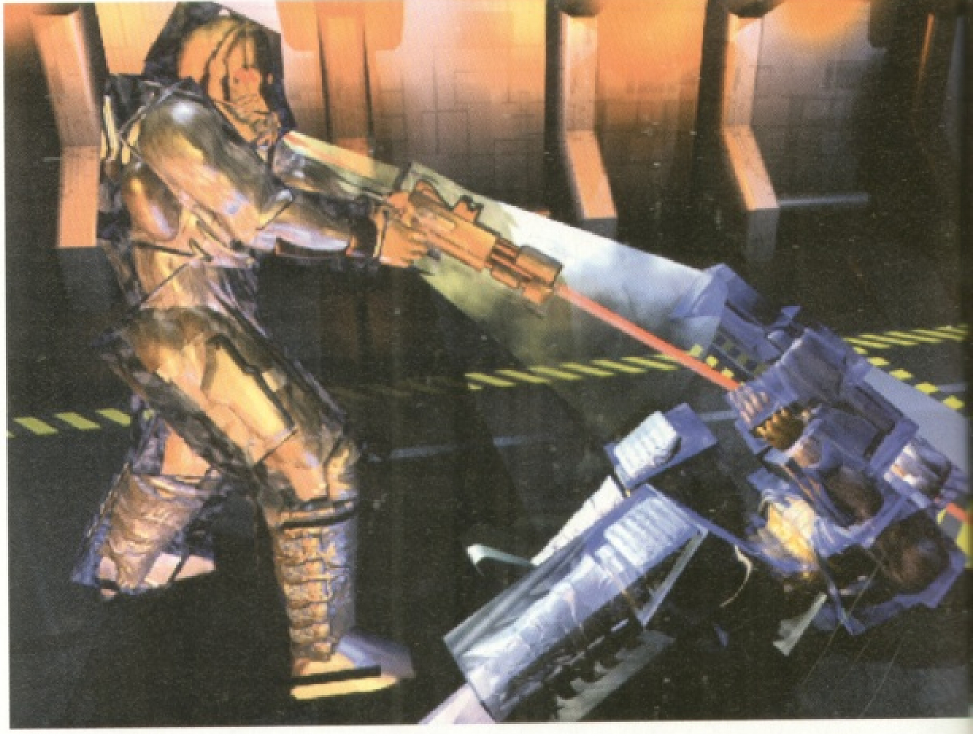
(Below) Visually Space Quest 6 is a giant step ahead of its predecessors, boasting glorious cartoon-style SVGA graphics comprised of both machine-rendered and hand-drawn artwork. The result, as you can see below, is quite simply stunning.





SCi-ence

Forgive and forget (if you can) the appalling Lawnmower Man and (if it's possible) the lamentable Cyberwar as you prepare to greet the dawning of a *new* and radically improved SCi. David Upchurch is your tour guide...



(Above) Although the in-game graphics won't be quite as good as this render, they'll capture the flavour pretty closely.

To most gamesplayers, SCi is best known as the company responsible for the abysmal Lawnmower Man game and its equally-duff pseudo-sequel, Cyberwar. Therefore, it's unlikely that the prospect of a preview round-up of SCi's forthcoming releases is filling you with excitement and interest.

But it should. Really.

You see, things have changed at SCi over the last few months. Now that the company has proved that it's got graphics well and truly sussed, it's focussing on improving another all-important area of game design — the gameplay.

All the games that I saw in development during my visit to SCi's swanky Southampton-based development HQ looked stunning — as you can tell from the shots on display here. However, what you can't tell is that they also played extremely well too. Something tells me 1995 is going to be a good year for SCi...

XS

Of all SCi's games in development, XS is the one that I'm most looking forward to. It's a first-person 3D shoot-'em-up featuring... Hang on, where are you going? Don't turn the page. No, no, XS isn't just another Doom clone — it just happens to sound like one.

It's a sort of futuristic take on the gladiatorial arenas of Ancient Roman times. Four combatants enter an enclosed combat pit strewn with cover-providing scenery and then let rip with whatever weaponry they have to hand. The last one left standing rises up the championships ranks and goes on to do bloody battle with another three contenders.

There are 60 competitors in all, some human, some alien, some robotic, each with their own unique arsenals and playing styles. Although XS will inevitably feature a multi-player link-up option, in which up to four players can compete head-to-head, the game's development team are working hard on some advanced AI routines that will emulate the unpredictable behaviour of a 'real' human opponent, so that even lone players will feel that they're playing over a network.

Unfortunately, no actual game shots were available at the time of going to press (what you see illustrating this page are renders from the game's many gorgeous cut-scenes) — the 3D engine is still being refined and tweaked, and what SCi had running at the time of my visit was, they said, totally unrepresentative of what the game will finally look like. However, what I did manage to see was still very impressive. The arenas are fully texture-mapped environments, complete with light-shading and depth-cueing. The battling contenders are all shaded, light-sourced 3D figures too, rather than scaled bitmap images *a la* Doom. The team has used motion-capture technology to animate them — and they look *fabulous*, running around with a natural fluidity that you just can't get by hand.

SCi's PR bod likended XS to Quasar — and if the final game can generate half the excitement and tension of that 'sport' then it'll be a real treat. Stay tuned, we'll keep you posted...

● *XS is due for release this November.*

Fiction

(Right) XS boasts a total of 60 different characters, each with their own playing styles and complements of deadly weapons.

The Lawnmower Man 2: Jobe's War

Following SCi's phenomenal — though inexplicable — success with its tie-ins to the first Lawnmower Man film, it's no surprise that they've snapped up the rights to the sequel which will, so we're told, be hitting the cinema screens of Britain next Spring.

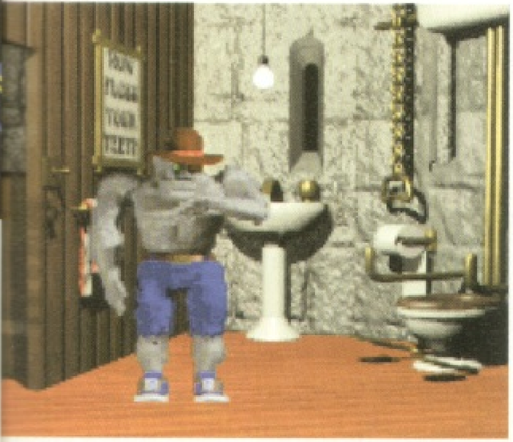
Starring Matt Frewer (of Max Headroom fame) and Patrick Bergin (of, er, that thing — *you know*, with the bird from Pretty Woman in it), LM2 continues the story started in the first film (somewhat surprisingly for a sequel) and features loads of very pretty computer-generated special effects sequences that will no doubt get thousands of bums on seats across the country.

Although SCi were unwilling to disclose the nature of the game they're producing to tie in with it, we're promised it'll be much better — and far more interactive — than the previous efforts. We'll wait and see...

Kingdom O' Magic

If you're a fan of top-notch, off-the-wall comedy adventures then you'll love Kingdom O' Magic. And if you're also a budget-conscious gamesplayer who seeks out Value For Money when you purchase a new game, then you'll probably be doubly-chuffed. Why? Because when you buy KOM, you get not one (pathetic!), not two (ugh, measly!), not even three (v. poor) but *six* games in one!

You see, Kingdom O' Magic offers the eager adventurer three independent quests to embark upon. On top of that you have a choice of two, very different heroes to be your alter-ego — either a rough-'n'-tough snakeman who's pretty handy in a fight, or a busty wench who's even handier with magic — with the nature of each quest changing depending on who you select. Get it? Two times three equals... six.



And, as a Jimmy Cricket would say, there's more. Unlike 'traditional' point-'n'-click adventures, where everything has to be done in order (you know, 'give the barber the comb to get the shampoo to wash the yak to get the milk, etc, etc'), KOM is totally free-form. You can doing whatever you want, when you want, where you want.

Each of the game's 90-plus computer-controlled characters has its own personality and agenda too, and will wander about the game's multitude of locations doing its own thing — it's not unusual, for example, to see a fight break out between two feuding rivals. They'll remember how you behave towards them as well, although not everyone responds favourably to a smile and a warm handshake, so don't think you can just smarm your way to success.

Kingdom O' Magic is, without a shadow of a doubt, pretty bizarre; anything can — and usually does — happen. But then, given the team in charge of its development, this was always going to be way. Indeed, one of the key figures behind the game is industry veteran Fergus Macneil who, many years ago, wrote some of best — and funniest — text adventures around. Anyone remember The Boggit?

Apart from its ker-razy humour and unsual gameplay, another thing that sets KOM apart is its stunning graphics. All the game locations and characters have been lovingly modelled in 3D then rendered, to create a visual style that is as unique as it is attractive. The volume of work that this has meant for KOM's hard-pressed team of graphic artists is immense, especially as many locations need to be rendered twice, once for during the day and again for at night (yes, there's a day cycle in KOM too).

The boys and girls at SCi have high hopes for KOM, and rightly so — if what I've seen is anything to go by, this is certain to be the adventuring highlight of the year. Indeed, such is SCi's confidence that there's already talk of a sequel in the air, in which the player will be able to travel to new and even more exotic areas of the Kingdom.

● *Kingdom O' Magic is due for release this November.*

Gender Wars

The second release on SCi's newly-formed Sci-Fi label (the first will be XS) is Gender Wars, a game that its producer describes as "like Syndicate — but with more explosions in it" (which, in my opinion, sounds like a *very* good thing).

It's being programmed 'out of house' by The Eighth Day, the team responsible for Core Design's Heimdall 2 — and in terms of plot you couldn't get two games more different. Whereas Heimdall 2 was based on the Norse legends, GW takes as its premise the battles of the sexes taken to its ultimate conclusion.

Yes, in GW's grim future world, men and women have given up trying to cohabit and so have set up single-sex communities and are locked in a battle for global supremacy. Well, let's face it — it was bound to happen eventually, what with men always leaving the toilet seat up and women always wasting money on clothes that are only ever worn once.

The player has the option to play as either the men or the women, and there are distinct missions which vary in tone depending on which you choose. Choose to play as the men, for example, and you'll probably embark on gung-ho, guns-a-blazing forays. Choose the women, on the other hand, and the missions will be more stealth-orientated (apparently there's one where the women have to break into a sperm bank).

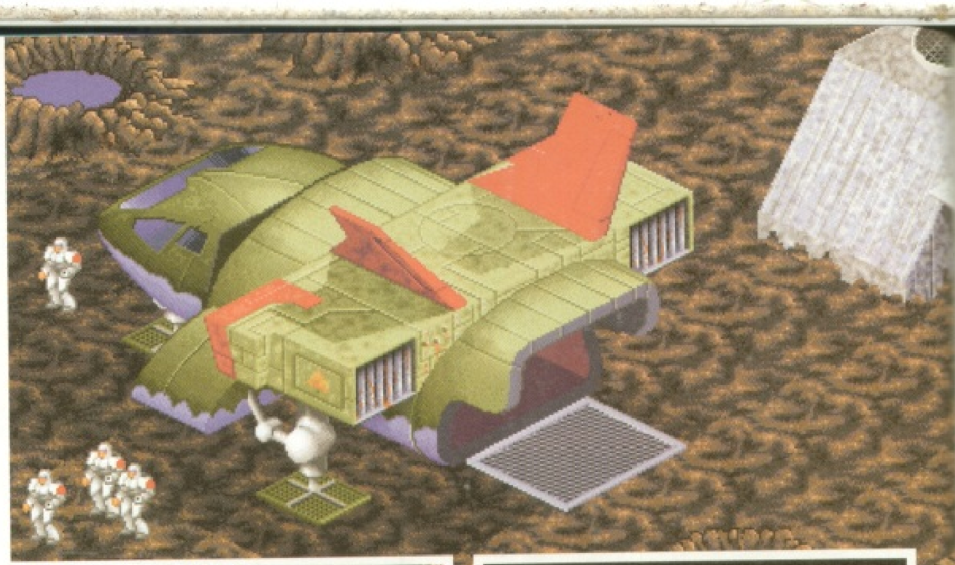
All these violent goings-on are depicted using an isometric-3D display, and there's even an option to play it in SVGA if your machine's powerful enough. The quality of the graphics and the animation on the tiny sprites is, as you'd expect from the boys behind Heimdall 2, exceptional.

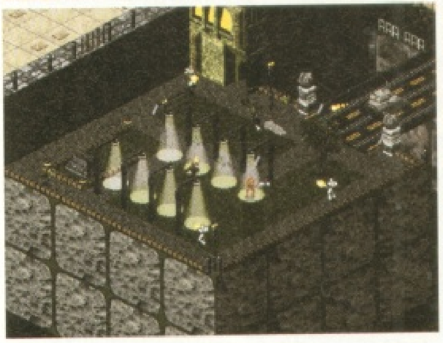
As in Syndicate the control system is completely mouse-driven, with the player simply pointing and clicking to move around and attack targets. However, a Syndicate-style R&D bit, in which you research weapons and so forth, has been decided against — which is a good thing, in my opinion, as I found it just got in the way of the fun in Syndicate. Instead, new weapons are introduced as the game progresses.

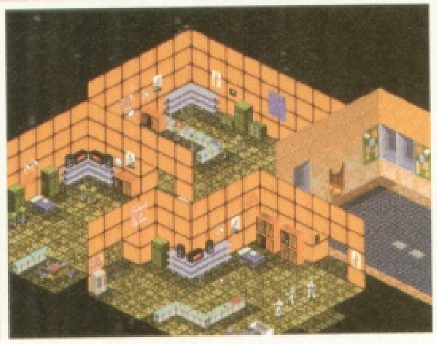
As you can probably tell, GW has its tongue firmly lodged in its cheek. The male sectors, for example, are a picture of squalor and neglect, with empty beer cans and fast-food boxes littering the streets, while the female sectors are neat, tidy and spotlessly clean. GW couldn't be classed as a sexist game, because each sex gets an equal amount of stick.

As with the rest of the games previewed here, we'll be taking a closer look at GW some time in the next few months when it's nearer completion. However, even at this stage, it's safe to to say that this will be one to watch out for.

● *Gender Wars is due for release this November.*







(Above) A shot from GW's obligatory rendered intro. The voiceovers for it are provided by Avon and Servalan from Blake's 7, AKA Paul Darrow and Jacqueline Pearce respectively.

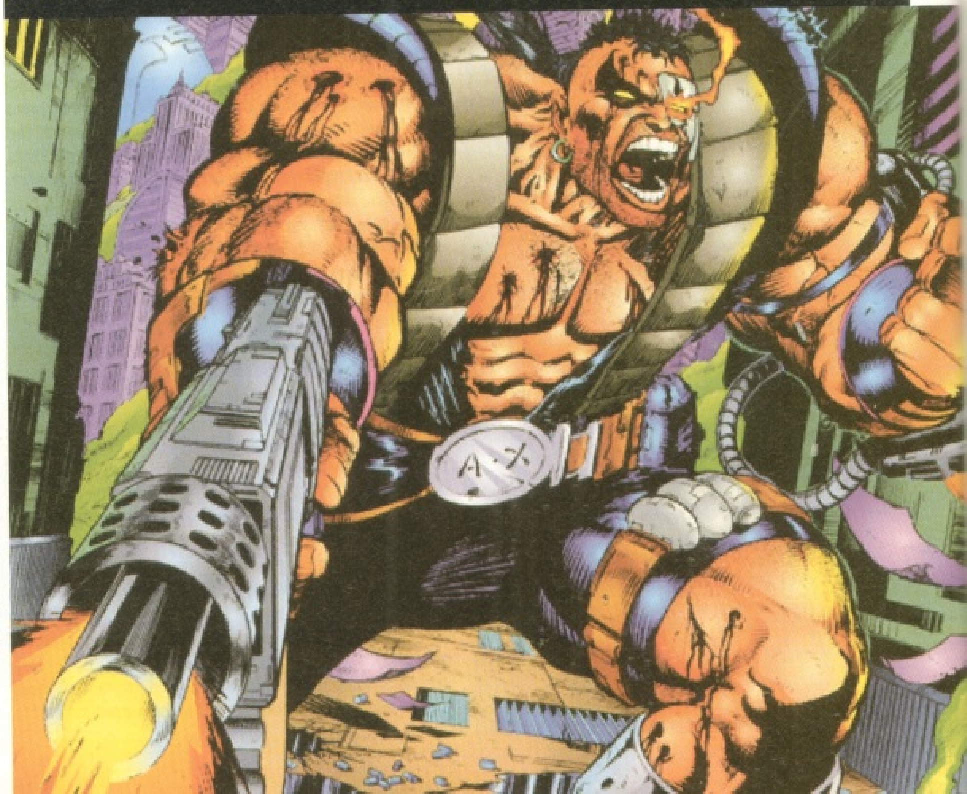
The Man Called A•X

Comic fans will know the name Marv Wolfman. He was Editor-In-Chief at Marvel Comics and later became Senior Editor at DC Comics and has won more comic awards that it's possible to list.

His new creation is 'The Man Called A•X' — and SCi has just announced that it's acquired both the interactive rights and (most interestingly) the *film* rights to the character. SCi's plan is to collaborate with another company — presumably one with extensive movie-making experience — to create both a film and a game based on the character.

The partner will be given full access to SCi's Silicon Graphics-based art department, which will cut down the cost of special effects generation — and, naturally, the graphics could then be ported straight across into the game, reducing game production costs.

It's early days, of course, and no partner has been formally announced as yet. However, watch out for more news soon...



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Major: Let's machine-gun them all in the face

Major- didn't actually say any of the stuff below, but what the heck

PRIME Minister John Major warned the Commons today that the ludicrously teeny prices charged for 2nd user PC games at London's Computer Exchange could lead to economic ruin for the rest of Britain.

"Oh yes", he whined, "they've got PC games starting at £5. There's an unrivalled selection on offer- always the latest titles available- and all at damned low prices. When people exchange their games towards other ones it works out even cheaper. Just what the hell do they think they're doing?"

Mr. Major then called on all British citizens to rise up as one and join him on a military assault on the Computer Exchange's London HQ.

"Anyone interested in signing up should pop down to their local police station. We'll give them a gun, ammunition, four grenades, and a baseball cap with the word "KILL" printed on it."

Oh, alright then. He didn't say anything of the sort. Sorry.

PC "SATISFIED MY EVERY NEED" SAYS BIG-JUGS PAM

EXCLUSIVE by CALVIN DONKEYKONG Jnr

BUSTY Pamela Ambersol, star of ITV's "Babewatch", yesterday heaped praise on the tip-top, one-stop, no-slop PC haven that is London's Computer Exchange yesterday.

Pam, 27, recently purchased a PC from the Computer Exchange's Hardware Department, and was overjoyed. "I couldn't believe it", she gasped over her absurd bosom, "a tailor-made PC- with the exact specs I required- at a price so low it defies all human logic and understanding."

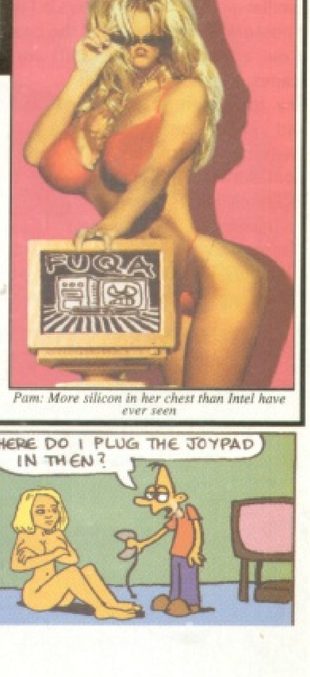
FUQA (the Computer Exchange PC brandname) PC's are fully guaranteed and can be upgraded in the blink of an eye. And shucks, that's not all.

Because apart from bargain deals on new, tailor-made PC's, the Computer Exchange also offers a supreme selection of new and 2nd-user hardware goodies for existing PC owners.

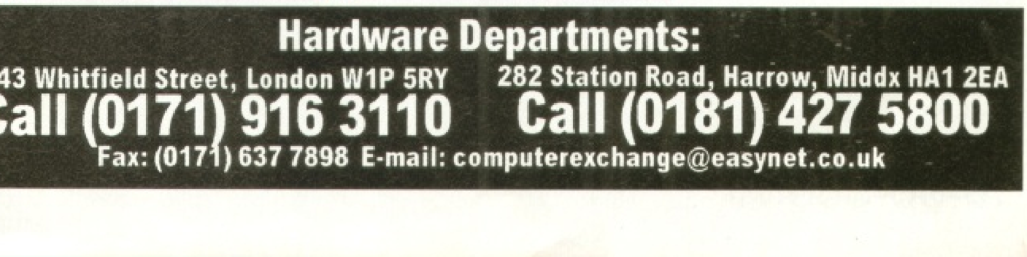
How about a Soundblaster card from as little as £25? Or a 1Mb SVGA card from a paltry £25? Or a 2nd-user 486 processor, starting at £20? Just call (0171) 916 3110 for details on today's bargains. Everything sold is fully guaranteed as well. So there.

You can even part-exchange your current hardware towards an altogether meatier setup- by far the cheapest way to upgrade- or simply sell it for a handful of hard cash.

Pamela Ambersol's done it- why the HELL don't you? Goddammit.



Pam: More silicon in her chest than Intel have ever seen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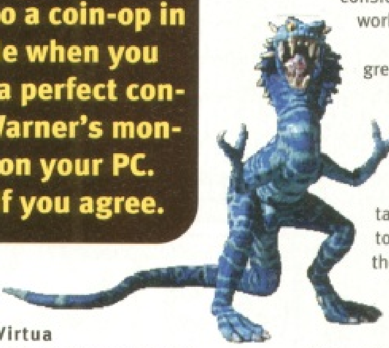
Raging On

Alex Simmons reckons it's a waste of time and money pumping cash into a coin-op in some dingy arcade when you could be playing a perfect conversion of Time Warner's monster beat-'em-up on your PC. Read on and see if you agree.

GAME	PRIMAL RAGE
PUBLISHER	TIME WARNER INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER	TEENY WEENY GAMES
WORK *STARTED*	JANUARY 1995
DUE FOR *COMPLETION*	AUGUST 1995



Get a load of this. Last year, when Ridge Racer, Virtua Fighter *et al* were raking in the cash at the local arcade, Primal Rage was in fact 1994's biggest-selling coin-op across the globe. It's true — this prehistoric punch-'em-up outsold all its rivals. So all credit then to Time Warner Interactive for promptly snapping up the lucrative license.

Primal Rage is yet another one-on-one beat-'em-up, but one that has unceremoniously dumped the familiar muscle-bound fighters in favour of giant-sized dinosaurs. There's seven of the beasts in all, battling it out across a variety of different prehistoric landscapes in which hordes of tiny tribesmen shout and cheer on the favourite lizard-like God. Street Fighter this definately ain't!

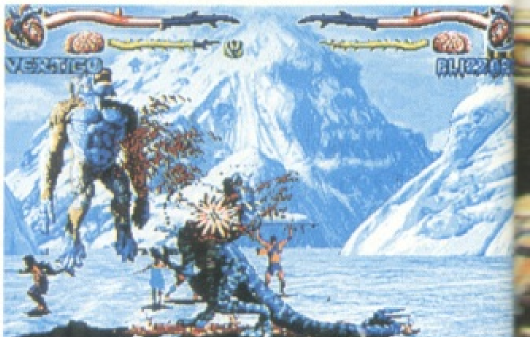
Developed by Teeny Weeny Games, the team responsible for the admirable Discworld adventure, work on Primal Rage started just a few months ago, in January to be precise. In just six months the game has shaped up tremendously, especially when you consider there are just two people working on the project.

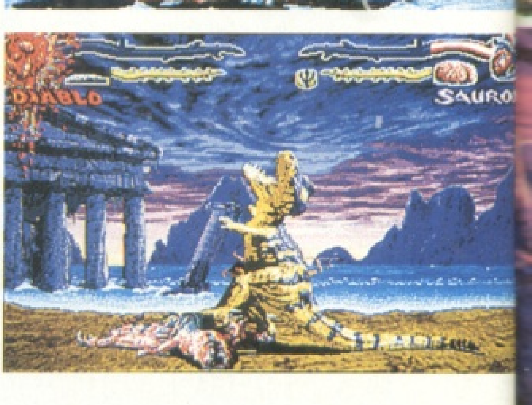
The reason Primal Rage has progressed so quickly is because the code for the arcade game was directly ported to the PC, as Time Warner Interactive's producer, Ken Humphries, reveals: "Our objective was to take the original arcade code and to convert it directly to the PC, and then to add things to improve the game, such as full-motion video and also options you don't normally get in the arcade."

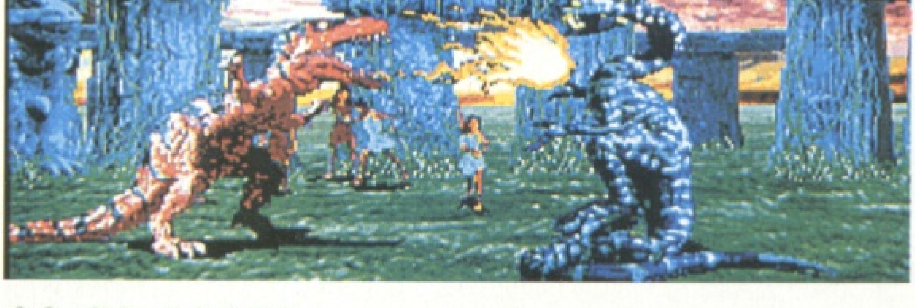
Ken continues: "All the features in the arcade game will feature in the PC version. What we are planning on doing is having all of the seven dinosaurs, and all 70 moves that go with each dinosaur. We'll have the different tribes people in the background, and all the special moves — you'll be able to do all the combination moves you can do in the arcade game. Basically we're planning on having everything exactly as the arcade game."

Extremely ambitious as I'm sure you'll agree, but thanks to the high-spec machines currently available the task was made considerably easier. However, have Time Warner just forgotten about punters who own lower-end 486s? No way, according to Humphries: "We're putting together three different versions of the game. There will be a 16Mb version of the game will have all the frames of animation, an 8Mb version of the game will have half the

The dinosaurs were first modelled in latex over a wire frame, then digitised into the game using Ray Harryhausen stop-motion animation. The result is quite spectacular, and amazingly the developers, Teeny Weeny games, have managed to cram all the animation into the 16Mb version of the game. 8Mb and 4Mb versions are also planned, but as you can imagine the animation has been drastically cut down to compensate for lack of memory.



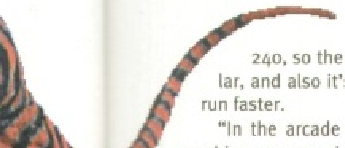




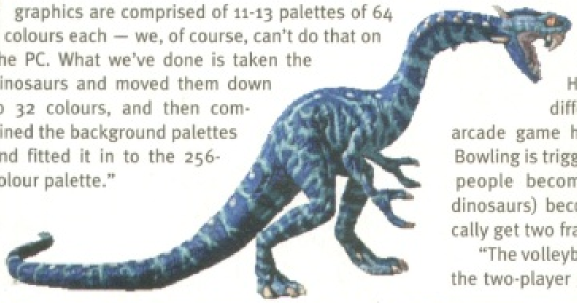
The Machine

frames of animation of the dinosaurs, and we will have a 4Mb version which will have just a few less."

Even though most of the code was taken directly from the Primal Rage coin-op, surely the six months of development weren't complete problem-free? "With any game you're going to run into some difficulties. On the PC one of the big issues was speed and frame rate. The game runs in 320 by 200 for two reasons: one is that the original coin-op was designed in 336 by 240, so the graphic mode was fairly similar, and also it's a way to make the PC game run faster.



"In the arcade version of Primal Rage the graphics are comprised of 11-13 palettes of 64 colours each — we, of course, can't do that on the PC. What we've done is taken the dinosaurs and moved them down to 32 colours, and then combined the background palettes and fitted it in to the 256-colour palette."



But while the PC version may not be *quite* up to the standard of the original, it makes up for this in other ways. For a start there's a selection of new games in addition to the basic one- and two-player games. Gamers are given the opportunity to brush up on the primal punches in the one-player training modes, in which you can battle it out against any of the other dinosaurs.

Then there's the all-new two-player 'tug of war', in which the two energy bars are replaced by a single one — each time a dinosaurs inflicts a wound it 'drags' the energy over to their side of the bar. Obviously the winner is the dinosaur who manages to completely fill their half of the bar. There's also a drawn-out endurance game, with both players picking a team of up to four dinosaurs and then fighting it out until one team has been completely eliminated.

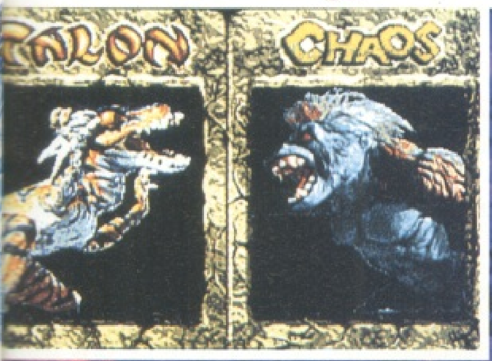
The PC conversion of Primal Rage also boasts the hidden games that featured in its arcade parent, as Humphries describes: "We have all the different hidden games of the original arcade game had, such as bowling and volleyball. Bowling is triggered in the two-player game. The tribe people become pins and Armadon (one of the dinosaurs) becomes the bowling ball, and you basically get two frames of bowling.

"The volleyball game occurs in a certain location in the two-player game. One of the tribesmen becomes the volleyball and you bat the him around until one person wins or 30 seconds expires. These are kinda neat little things that are part of the arcade, and that we've moved into our game. We've also added a few things of our own, activated using cheat codes."

As the moment the 16Mb game is almost ready, with the remaining two versions due for completion in the next month or so. Teeny Weeny are also currently working on the sound. According to Ken: "Music and sound effects were a real critical part of the original Primal Rage game; it does a lot to set the mood and really gives it that dinosaur-y feel.

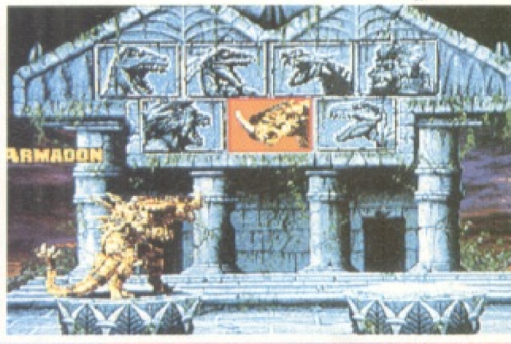
"We've been working very hard to emulate that — Teeny Weeny games has taken the original music and has started to work with the PC. We've also taken the original sound effects and done our best to emulate that whole sound that you got in the arcade game."

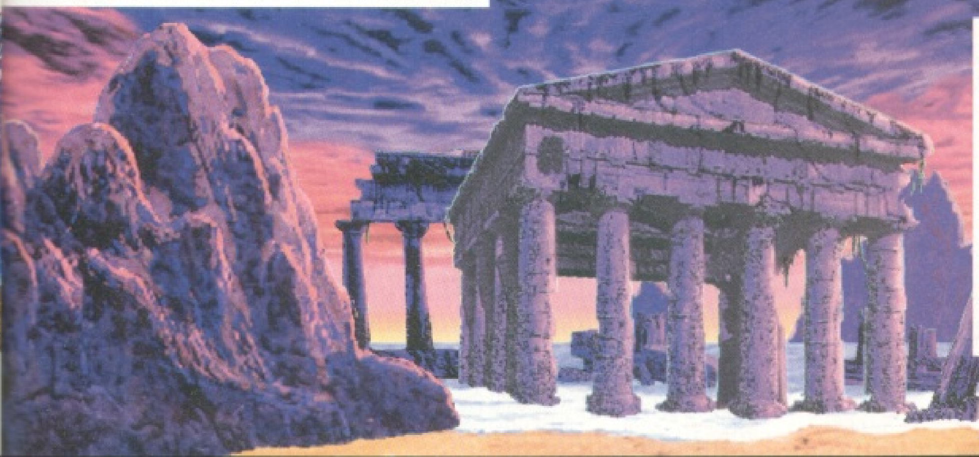
From the early versions we've seen here at PC GAMES, Primal Rage is shaping up very nicely indeed. However, there are still numerous tweaks to the gameplay and presentation that have yet to be implemented. For the full review of Time Warner's beat-'em-up, check out October's issue.

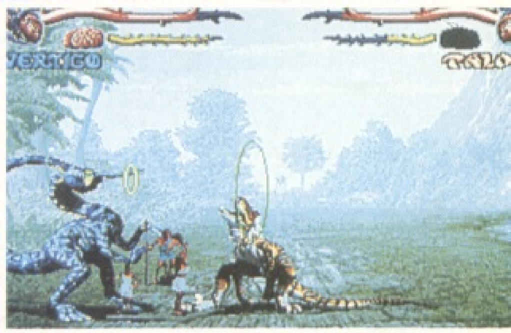


(Left and right) There are seven dinosaurs to choose between, each with their own special moves and attacks in addition to the usual array of bites, punches and kicks.

(Below) Feast your eyes on this! Primal Rage really does look quite amazing, as this rendered backdrop shows.







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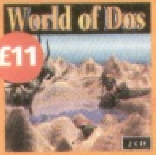

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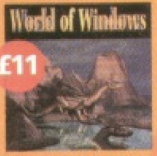

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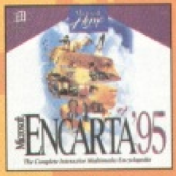

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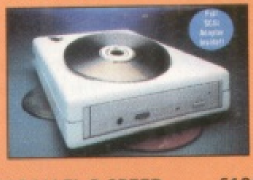

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reviews

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Prince Morkin

Reviewed On CD

Alex Dampier Hockey	**Merit Software**	**55**
Brett Hull Hockey '95	**Accolade**	**55**
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Reviewed On Disk

Lords Of Midnight	**Domark**	**38**

HOW WE DO WHAT WE DO...

Everyone at PC GAMES is a complete gaming nut. That's why we know exactly what you want to see in a game review (or so we like to think).
So what do you get?

Well, you get all the info you need and no waffling — we get straight to the point. On top of that you get loads of big screenshots of the game in action, along with maps and diagrams helpfully illustrating any major gameplay features — after all a picture, as they say, speaks a thousand words.

Then we compare the big games with another of similar type in the 'It's A Bit Like...' panel. Typically this will be the best game in its genre so you'll probably be pretty familiar with it, thus giving you a handy point of reference.

The whole PC GAMES team plays every game reviewed and, although only one person's name appears on each review, the criticisms and Overall mark reflect all of our combined opinions, hopefully giving you a balanced view. Should any team member disagree violently with the rest, his comments will appear in a special box in the review.

Finally, we have the essential score panel...

All the guff you need to know about who publishes the game, who developed it, its price and when it's due to be released. You even get a contact 'phone number to call if you want more info.

Details the minimum machine specification as recommended by the software company, along with how much valuable hard disk space it takes up and what optional peripherals it'll recognise.

The game's good and bad points, which are basically a concise summary of the criticisms made in the main review.

The Overall Score. We don't see any point in ratings for playability and all that other stuff — you get one mark to sum everything up and that's it.

The coveted PC GAMES STAR is awarded to any game scoring 90% or over, indicating that the game in question is an essential addition to any gamesplayer's software collection.

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THE GOOD...

- At last — an 'interactive movie' that actually looks like a movie.
- The dogfighting is tense, exciting and looks fabulous.
- Intriguing plot that keep you hooked from the start.
- Superb SVGA graphics and excellent sound.

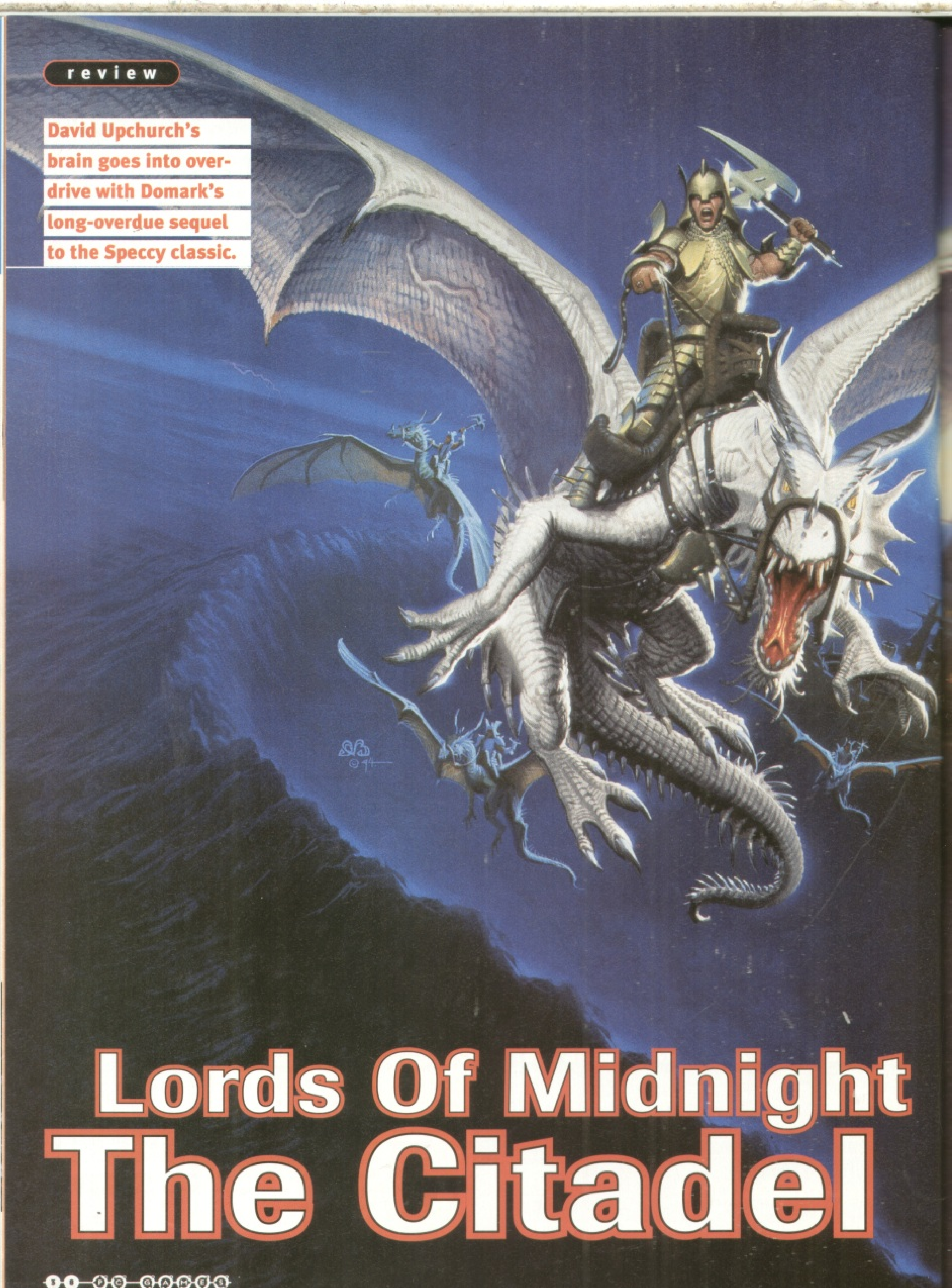
...AND THE BAD

- Needs a monster PC to run at anything near a playable speed.
- The missions lack depth and variety.

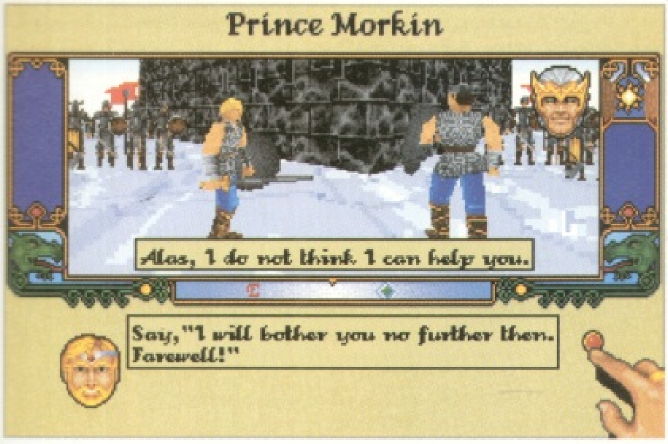
Overall

92%

David Upchurch's brain goes into overdrive with Domark's long-overdue sequel to the Speccy classic.

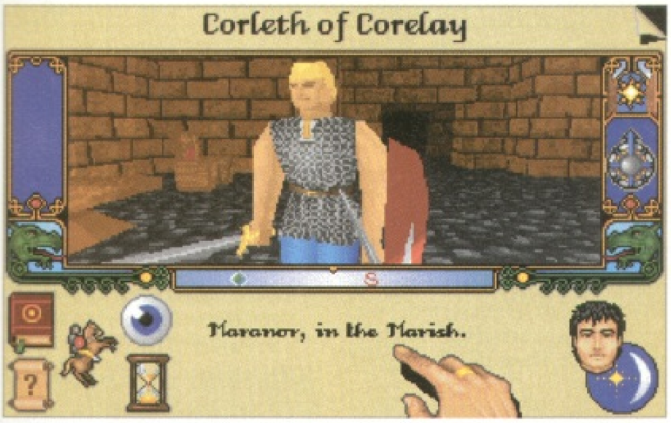


Lords Of Midnight
The Citadel



Alas, I do not think I can help you.

Say, "I will bother you no further then. Farewell!"



Maranor, in the Marish.

(Top) When you bump into someone you have the option of having a natter to them. This takes the form of a 'multiple-choice' Q&A session, as usually seen in graphic adventures. Be careful what you say — one wrong word and you could make a foe out of a friend.

(Above) Although most of the action in LOM:TC takes place on the map screen, there are bits where you get to explore the dark interiors of the Blood March's many castles and citadels.

To lovers of fine strategy games, Mike Singleton is quite simply 'the guvnor'. He established his reputation for creating big, deep and thoroughly absorbing strategy epics with the original Spectrum version of Lords Of Midnight back in the early 80s, a reputation which was reinforced by the sequel, Doomdark's Revenge. Then, with the aid of his development team Maelstrom, he went on to release the excellent Midwinter and Midwinter II on the Amiga and Atari ST.

And now we have Lords Of Midnight: The Citadel — and I'll bet right now that any strategy-heads out there reading this are already starting to froth and foam at the mouth, especially those who remember the Spectrum's glory days. But LOM:TC is more than just a revamp of the old classic; it is, in effect, Lords Of Midnight III, a true continuation of the epic saga started in the original Lords Of Midnight some *ten years* ago (if there's one thing that Mr Singleton could never be accused of, it's trying to make a quick buck).

The action takes place in the Blood March, a lawless, chaotic region to the south-east of the land of Midnight. Here, in the Dark Citadel in Maranor, resides Boroth Wolfheart, an evil and devious man who, with aid of his army of Dark Fey, plans to seize control of the Blood March and ultimately to invade Midnight. Your aim, as the good Prince Morkin (remember him, Speccy owners?), is to raise an army that will eventually defeat Wolfheart and put a stop to his dreams of world domination.

However, as the game begins, the odds are stacked heavily against you: your father and ruler of Midnight, Luxor the Moonprince, has been taken captive by Wolfheart after an ill-advised scouting mission into enemy territory went wrong, while two other powerful allies, Coreleth of Corelay and Arin Lord Blood, who were also part of Luxor's band, are currently on the run from Wolfheart's forces in Maranor. Only Araleth the White and Rorthron the Wise remain free and willing to assist you. If you're looking for a challenge then, believe me, you've come to right place...

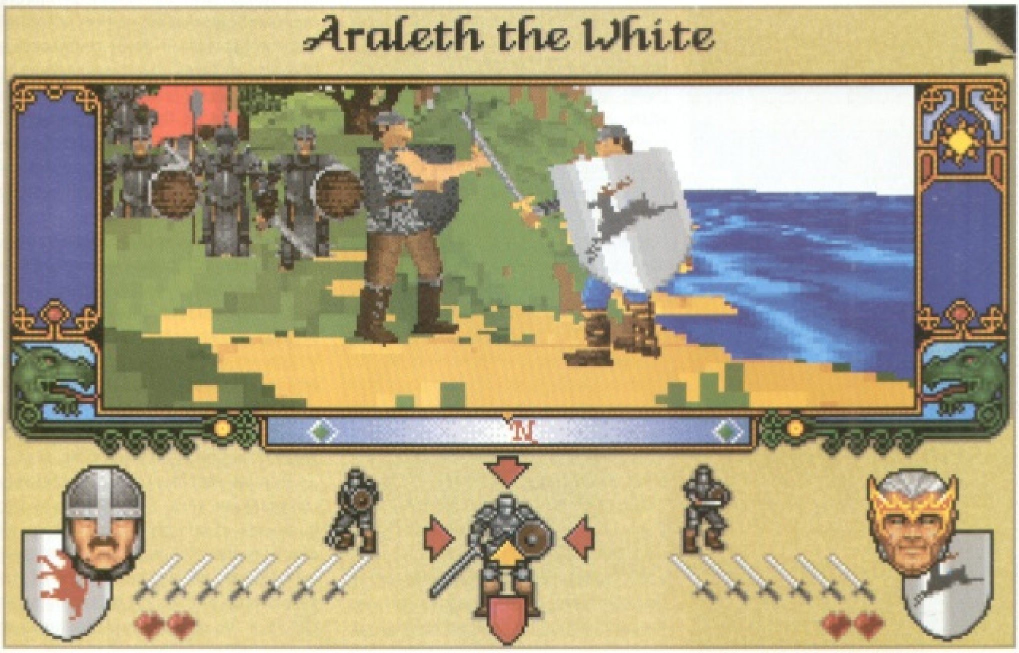
Although graphically LOM:TC is barely recognisable as a descendant of the Spectrum originals, in terms of gameplay it's still surprisingly familiar. While there are a host of new features and gameplay facets, fans of the old games will more than likely feel right at home as soon as they load up. Indeed, it's important to stress that, despite the look of some of the screenshots, this is most definitely NOT an action game — anyone buying LOM:TC expecting an Ultima Underworld-style dungeon romp or 'Doom with swords' is going to be sorely disappointed.

Don't get me wrong, there are those sorts of elements in the mix, but at heart LOM:TC is a pure strategy game with strong RPG undertones. Due to the loss of your father and his two comrades, your forces are seriously depleted, and so much of the game (at least in the initial stages) is spent travelling between towns and villages, recruiting troops and attempting to persuade the game's 38 computer-controlled key characters to join you in your quest.

Of course, getting these key characters to rally to your cause isn't simply a case of walking up to them and asking them nicely; many of them have loved ones held hostage by Wolfheart, and will only join you once they've been rescued and brought safely home. Others may want special magical artefacts brought to them before they'll even think about waging war against Wolfheart — and once again, it's up to you to find them.

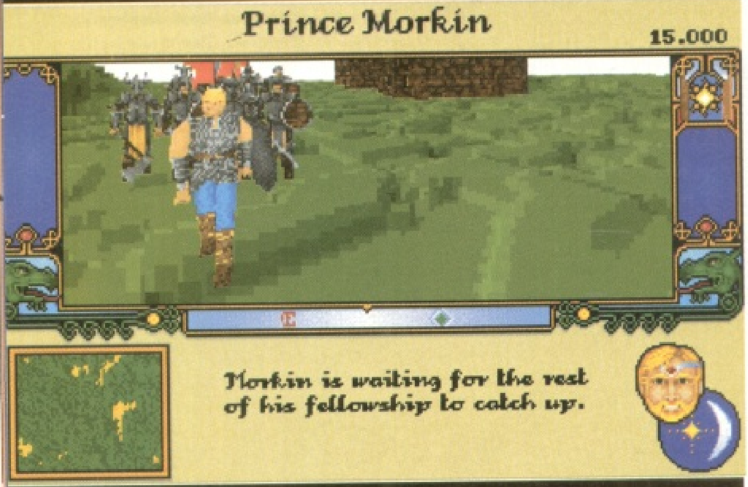
Once a key character has become part of the Alliance (the umbrella term for Morkin and his allies), you can then issue orders to them and the armies under their control. The orders you can give are extremely wide-ranging. Obviously there are the basic orders, such as 'go somewhere' or 'attack so-and-so', but there are also orders that will make a character seek out and recruit another character, or embark on a quest to find an artefact, or attempt to rescue someone from Wolfheart's prison fortresses.

It's how you use the various members of the Alliance that dictates whether you'll eventually win or lose. Each key character has their own set of personality traits, and these govern how they'll react to certain situations and interact with other characters in the game — it's a bad idea, for example, to send somebody with a fierce, aggressive nature to sit at the



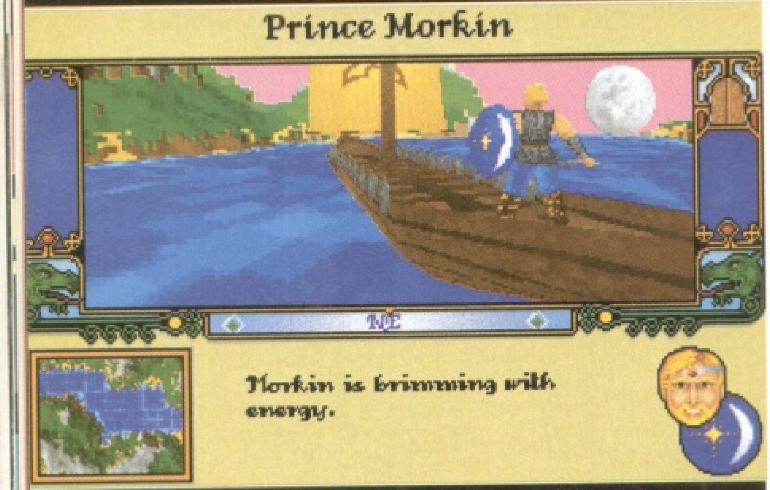
Planes, Trains & Automobiles...

...Or Feet, Boats & Dragons, in Lords Of Midnight's case. Yes, there's a variety of ways to travel around the Blood March, from the prosaic to the poetic.



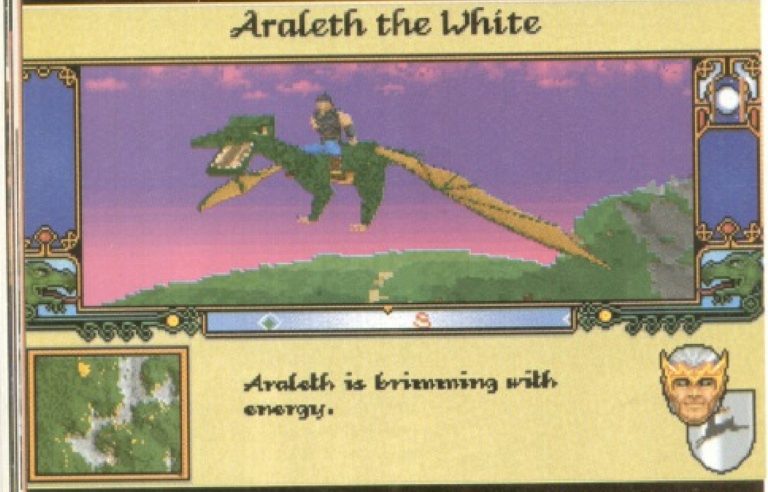
Morkin is waiting for the rest of his fellowship to catch up.

These boots were made for walking — which is just as well, because your heroes get to do a hell of a lot of it. Haven't they heard of horses, the fools?



Morkin is brimming with energy.

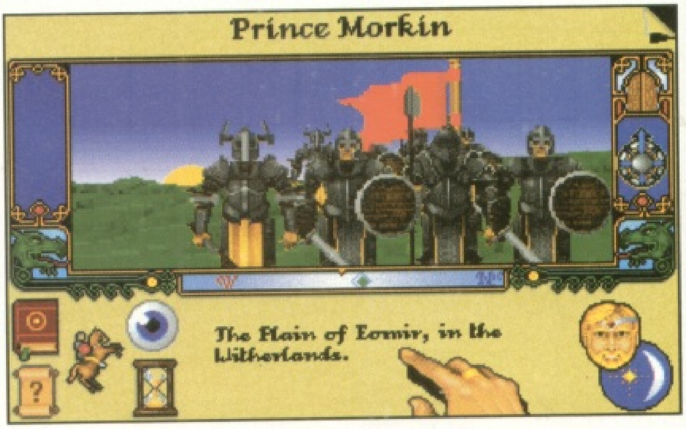
It's not easy to swim with armour on, which is why boats are pretty essential if you want to get your army across any large expanses of water.



Araleth is brimming with energy.

Why walk when you can fly? Dragons are great for getting characters from A to B in double-quick time — the only trouble is they have to leave their armies behind.

(Below) Your armies (assuming you've got any) will loyally follow their leader to the ends of the earth — unless their leader hops onto a dragon and sods off, that is.



The Plain of Eomir, in the Witherlands.

negotiating table, because it's more than likely it'll get you nowhere.

Thanks to the magical power of Morkin's Moonring, it's possible to 'visit' the characters in the Alliance and see what they're up to at any given time — which is where the sexy(ish) 3D graphics come in. The camera switches between an assortment of viewing angles, allowing you to watch the characters and their armies as they march purposefully across the Blood March, carrying out whatever orders you've given them.

True, the stiffly-animated, crudely texture-mapped characters of LOM:TC look a little disappointing compared to other recent 3D releases such as BioForge, while the chunky landscape isn't a patch on, say, Magic Carpet's brilliantly-devised game environment. It's also a shame that the armies under each character's control aren't animated — as they glide, motionless, across the landscape, following their leader, it can look a little disconcerting. But even so, for a strategy game, LOM:TC's graphics are quite exceptional — and don't forget that, at the end of the day, they're are merely window dressing to the game's tactical heart.

As an extra bonus you can, if you wish, assume direct personal control over a character, using the mouse to point them in the direction you want them to go and the left and right mouse buttons to make them walk or stop respectively. It's not that useful an option, to be honest — you're better off letting the computer worry about getting characters from A to B, while you busy yourself with more pressing strategic matters — but even so, it's often quite pleasant just strolling about the texture-mapped landscape, taking in the scenery, or wandering around inside castles, seeking out hostages and looking for artefacts.

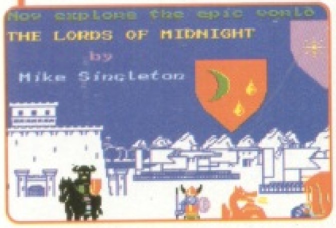
Combat between characters and armies operates in a similar 'hands-on/hands-off — it's up to you' sort of way. You can take the easy route and let the computer resolve battles for you, the outcome being decided by an equation based on each character's skills and the size of the armies with them. Alternatively you can step and control the battle yourself, guiding your character's sword blows by clicking on a figure representing your foe at the bottom of the combat screen (your performance here also dictates how the army lead by your character fares). Although it's often best to let the computer control battles, in 'David & Goliath'-style encounters taking personal control of the fight can occasionally result in some surprising victories.

Like most in-depth strategy games, LOM:TC couldn't be classed as a 'pick-up-and-play' sort of game. In its favour the player interface is very friendly and easy to use, with a 'Help' button on each screen that gives you advice on what all the icons do and what purpose they serve, and there's also a walk-through in the manual that helps ease you into things a bit.

But despite this, LOM:TC is still very confusing at first, simply due to the huge cast of non-player characters, all of whom are milling about, doing their own thing, and the sheer size of the gameworld. You've got to be willing to put in a lot of work and prepared to

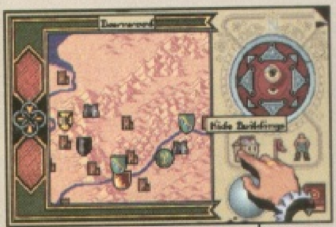
It's a bit like...

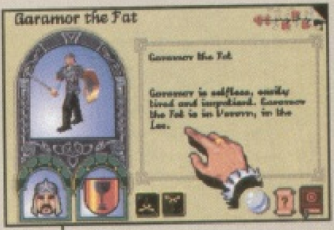
Yes, I know it's a bit of a cop out, but I've racked my poor, over-worked brain to think of another game that matches LOM:TC's epic sweep and I just can't think of anything — except the original Spectrum version of Lords Of Midnight. Yes, so LOM:TC looks totally different to that old 8-bit monochrome classic, but the basic gameplay is very similar.



(Right) This is the Almanac & Bestiary, which contains handy info on all the creatures, both good and evil, which roam the Blood March. It's required reading for all LOM novices.

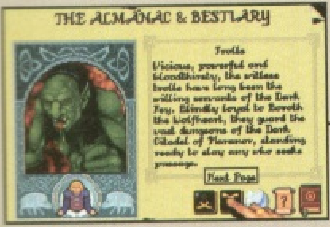
(Below) You'll spend a lot of time here on the Map screen, working out strategies. The icons to the right of the map window let you zoom in and out as well as pan around.

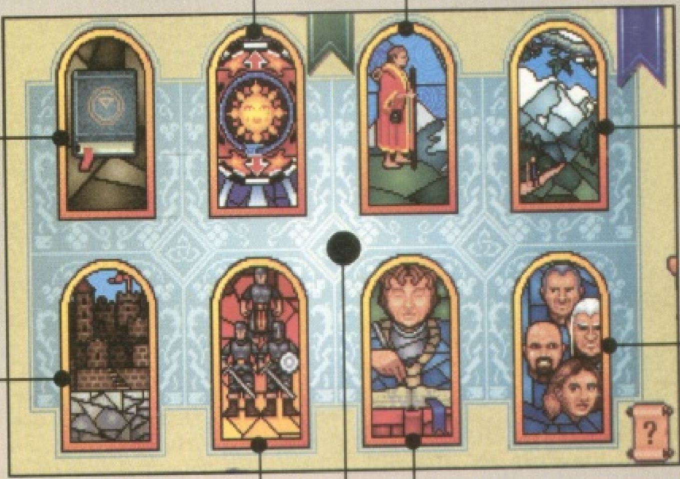


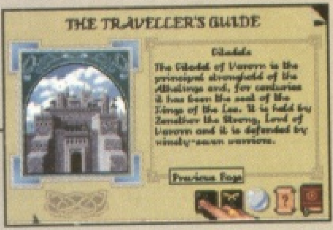


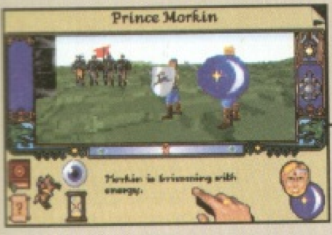
(Left) The Heroes & Villains screen features short biographies of all the key characters in the game, detailing their unique personality traits as well as their location.

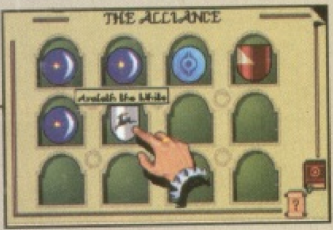
(Below) The Traveller's Guide is a sort of 'Let's Go' handbook for the Blood March, listing the many locations of interest, both natural and man-made, in the troubled realm.





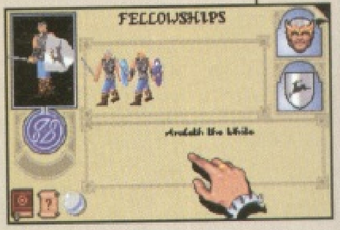


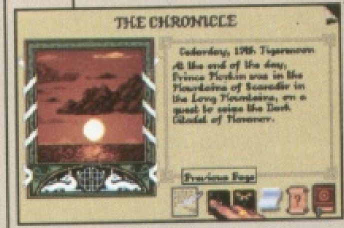




(Above) Selecting the Here & Now screen takes you to a 3D view of the character you're dealing with. From here you can watch them carry out their orders, or take control yourself.

(Right) Characters can be ordered to link up with other characters to form Fellowships numbering hundreds of troops — and this is where you can see who's in each army.





(Above) This screen shows you the characters who are currently part of the Alliance. By clicking on a shield you can go immediately to that character's info screen.

(Left) The Chronicle is a day-by-day account of what you've achieved since you started playing — it's useful for reviewing your progress so far.

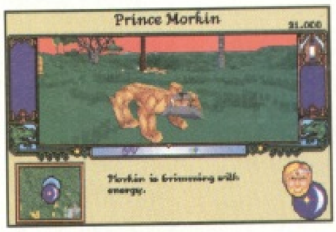
Confused? You Will Be...

This is the main menu screen. From here you can access every other game screen, as well as the save/load game options. You know the sort of thing.

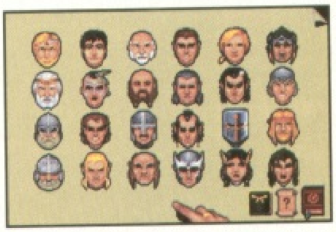
accept quite a few false starts before you even begin to make any sort of progress in the epic war against Wolfheart's forces. Still, strategy fans will be used to that — indeed, most of you probably enjoy the challenge of discovering every facet and nuance of a game like this.

And it has to be said that once the learning curve has eventually been climbed, LOM:TC proves to be a bit of a cracker. There's a truly epic feel about LOM:TC that hasn't been seen since... well, the original Lords Of Midnight. As your armies slowly begin to grow and you become a credible fighting force, the sense that you're part of 'something big' is outstanding. This feeling is further enhanced by the game's plot and the character profiles, which create a depth that's unmatched by almost any other game I've ever played.

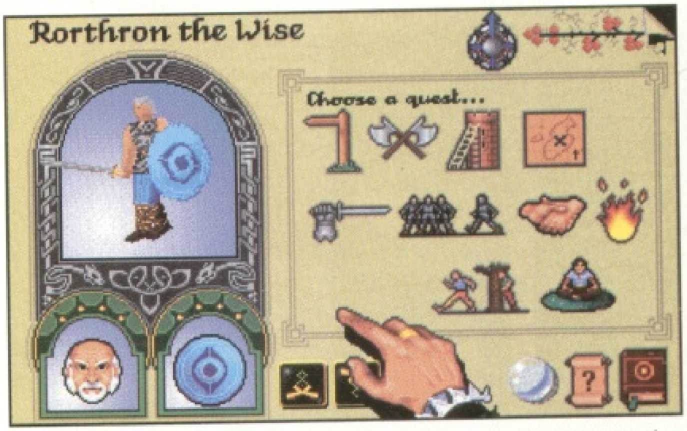
Which makes the game's initial difficulty level all the more saddening; most gamesplayers — i.e. the type whose strategic ambitions end at more readily accessible fare like Command & Conquer — are unlikely to have the patience or the stamina to discover for themselves what an engrossing place the land of Midnight is.



As well as the dangers posed by Wolfheart's forces, there are also wild animals to deal with.



Just a fraction of the 30-odd key characters starring in Lords Of Midnight: The Citadel.



(Above) By clicking on the portrait in the bottom-left of the screen, you can give a character a new quest — just click on the icons to send them on theirt way.

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT

DOMARK/MAELSTROM

(0181) 780 2222

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 6.5Mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

All major soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- A truly vast gameworld, containing loads of people to meet and things to do.
- Almost as good a player interface as you could hope for.
- Once it gets its hooks into you, that's it — forever!

...AND THE BAD

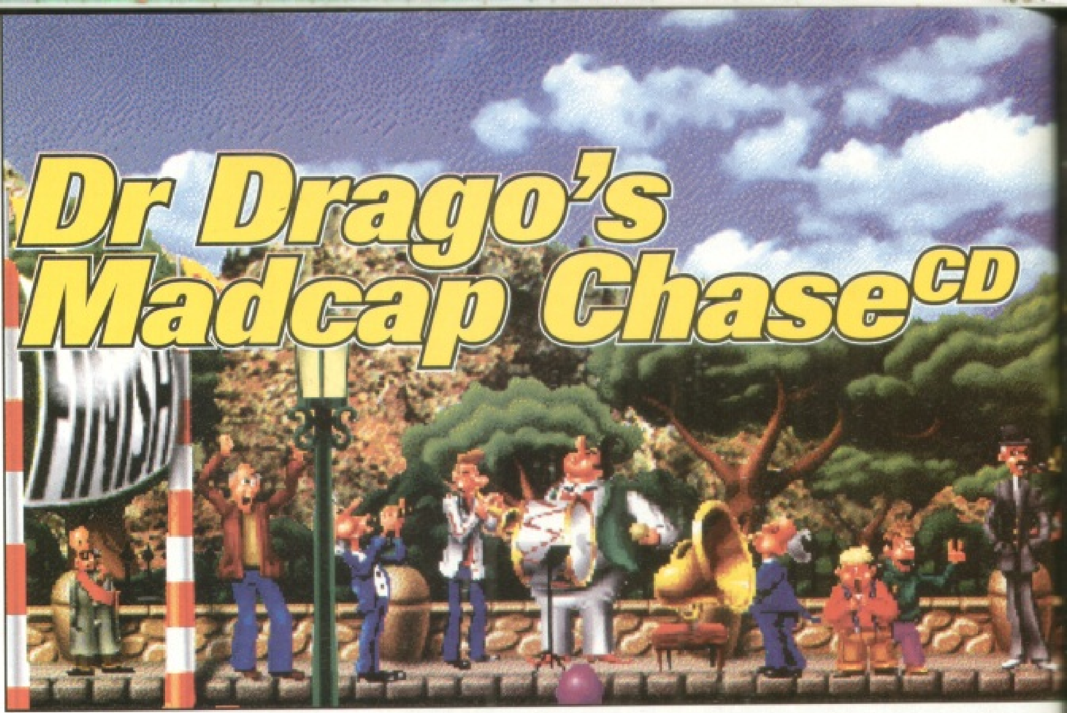
- Very hard to get into, despite a manual walk-through.
- The graphics look old-fashioned.

Overall

86%

David Upchurch gets on board (geddit?) with Blue Byte's crazy chase game.

Dr Drago's Madcap Chase CD



I don't know about you, but whenever anyone mentions playing a boardgame it always conjures up childhood memories of long, wet, incredibly *dreary* summer holidays, when there was nothing for it but to swallow your pride and idle away the never-ending days by playing Monopoly or Mousetrap (sorry — "MOUSETRAP!") with your obnoxious kid sister. And Dr Drago's Madcap Chase, which is essentially a boardgame on PC, does nothing to eradicate those memories.

It's not that it's *bad* as such — in fact, as far as boardgames on computer go it's quite well implemented — it's just that you can't help thinking "Why did they bother?". If it wasn't for the size of the playing area (which is actually one the game's faults, but I'll come to that later), there's no reason why DDMC couldn't be played on a real board with little plastic pieces and proper playing cards — and, to be honest, it'd be a whole lot better for it.

In short, DDMC is best described as 'Monopoly with cars'. Up to eight players (either human or computer controlled) race around a map of Europe, trying to win prize money by being first to reach target destinations set randomly by the computer. This cash can then be used to buy properties in the cities, which in turn generate more money in rent each and every game 'year'. This is pretty useful, as the winner is the player with the most money after a pre-set number of turns.

Each 'square' on the board has some sort of 'special' attached to it; blue squares, for example, award you a random cash bonus, while red squares take money away. Especially handy are the gold squares, which give you a 'Chance' card when you land on them. These cards, which you can opt to play instead of taking your turn, allow you to do anything from roll the die up to five times, to blocking off certain roads with hazardous nail traps.

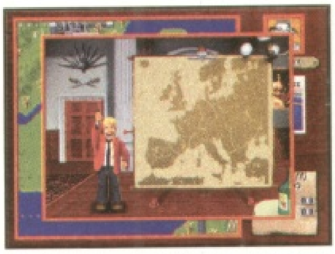
The icing on the cake is the eponymous Dr Drago himself; a moustache-twiddling baddy in the Terry-Thomas vein. After the first destination is reached he latches himself onto the player currently last (which you can't help feeling is a little unfair) and starts draining money off them. However, he can be passed onto other players by driving past them.

The problems with DDMC are legion. For starters, success depends far too much on luck. Because you have to roll the exact number to land on the destination square, you often find yourself in the unfortunate situation where you've arrived in the vicinity of your target *long* before the other players, and then have to spend the next half-an-hour shunting backwards and forwards over the square as you wait for the right number to come up.

Likewise, some of the Chance cards are incredibly powerful and if you're fortunate enough to get one you have a huge advantage over the others. Don't get me wrong, I appreciate that there has to be an element of chance in games like this to keep people on their toes, but there has to be a greater element of skill too.

Another problem with DDMC is that the playing area is just too large. If you've all just been sent down to the bottom of the map to get to, say, Morocco, and then are told to go back up to Sweden, it takes *forever* to get across the board, especially if there's a lot of players all playing Chance cards on each other. After a while it can get pretty tedious...

The final nail in the coffin is that DDMC is not exciting *at all* as a one-player game, and even if you do manage to get all your mates gathered around your PC I'm sure there's far more interesting things you could be playing than this. Still, there is one really good thing about DDMC: it comes bundled with a free two-button joypad. Like, *wow*...



(Above) This is your host for DDMC — an annoying git with a habit of talking in rhyme.

DR DRAGO'S MADCAP CHASE^{CD}

BLUE BYTE/IN-HOUSE

(01604) 232200

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, SVGA, 4Mb RAM, 15Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive and Windows 3.1.

ALSO SUPPORTS

All Windows-compatible soundcards.

THE GOOD...

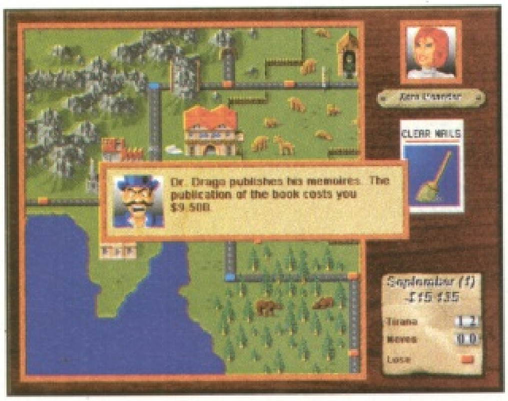
- You get a free joypad!
- Well, at least there's no chance of you ever losing the pieces...

...AND THE BAD

- No fun at all as a one-player game...
- ...And not much better as a multi-player game.

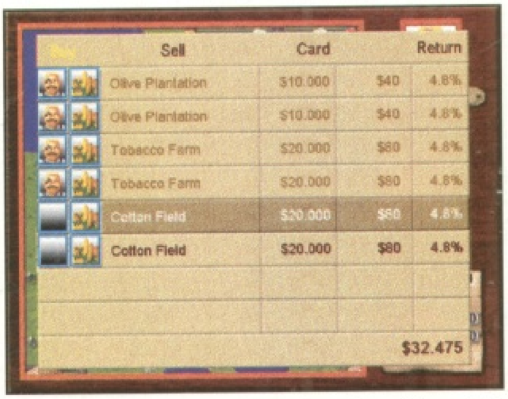
Overall

42%



Dr. Drago publishes his memoires. The publication of the book costs you $9.500.

(Above) The evil, moustache-twiddling Dr Drago wastes yet more of some poor player's hard-fought-for cash. The git.



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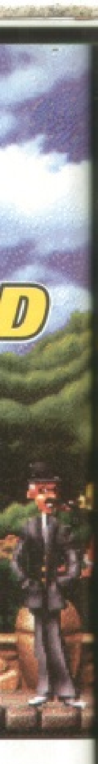
Olive Plantation	$10.000	$40	4.8%
Olive Plantation	$10.000	$40	4.8%
Tobacco Farm	$20.000	$80	4.8%
Tobacco Farm	$20.000	$80	4.8%
Cotton Field	$20.000	$80	4.8%
Cotton Field	$20.000	$80	4.8%

$32.475

(Above) When you land on a city you can spend some of your winnings on local properties, which then earn you rent money every game 'year'.



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ALONE IN THE DARK
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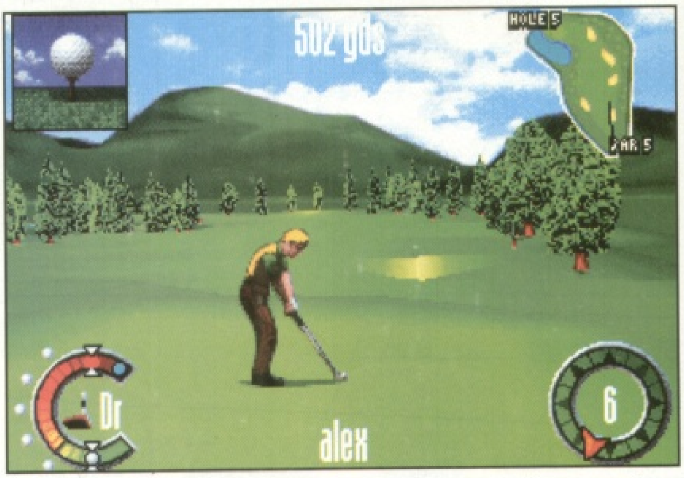
The Scottish Open Virtual Golf CD

Core Design challenge old golf pro Alex Simmons to whip out his mashie niblick.



This game has problems with its 3D display, animation and ball movement — but different camera views and a multi-player option provide long-term interest.

Ever since I played Leaderboard on the Commodore 64 I've been hooked on golf games. The PC has already had its fair share of contenders though, including EA's underachieving PGA Tour Golf For Windows, the excellent Links games (now available on the Kixx budget label) and, most recently, the mediocre Nick Faldo's Golf Deluxe.

Initially, Core's contribution to the genre is quite appealing, with four courses, a multi-player option, 65 computer pros, a player edit facility and a high-score table. There are six kinds of game, too: the Scottish Open at Carnoustie (the ultimate prize), Tournament (four rounds against human and computer opponents), Skins (prize money awarded for each hole), Derby (a team game), Shoot Out (sudden death) and Practice.

However, when you get down to the action the appeal begins to wear off. The one very impressive feature here is the range of camera views, with six different angles available: two from behind the player, one from down the course, a couple of tracking cameras and one mounted at tree-top level. These are particularly useful (and self-indulgent) when you're watching a replay of a great shot.

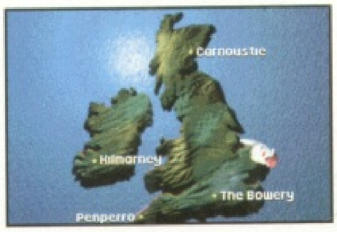
Everything else about the golfing action is either standard fare or below par. You have a choice of 13 (from 16) clubs, allowing you to drive and chip with hook and slice, escape from bunkers and putt. The assorted options include hole fly-bys, a grid overlay, caddie advice and mulligans. Club selection, shot power and accuracy are all controlled with the mouse, and natural hazards such as wind, trees and water make life difficult.

There are several problems. For starters, the terrain graphics are unspectacular, the colours are dull, the sprite close-ups are blocky, the sense of perspective is poor, the player animation is clumsy and the ball movement is slightly odd. There's also a conflict of accuracy between the map and what's actually happening on the course. Often when my ball appeared to be on the fairway or green on the map, it had actually landed in the water, in a bunker or in the rough.

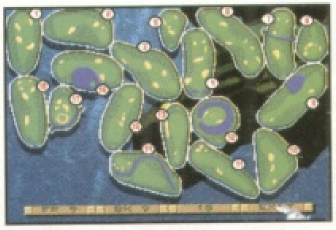
Virtual Golf proclaims itself as an arcade-style game rather than a simulation, which appears to be an excuse to miss out some options you might expect from a golf game. For example, you don't get a driving range or a practice green. There are no special shots (such as PGA Tour Golf's 'punch' shot) to help you clear trees safely. The green gradients are unsophisticated, making putting relatively simple, and there's no visible fringe to the greens, which limits your shot choices.

The pre-match presentation isn't so hot, either. Apart from having to press the ESCape key several times to skip through the tedious introductory frills, the menus look bland and are confusing to use at first. There are only eight saved game slots and no opportunity to save spectacular strokes — and the fact that you need to achieve pro status before you can play half of the courses is a bit mean.

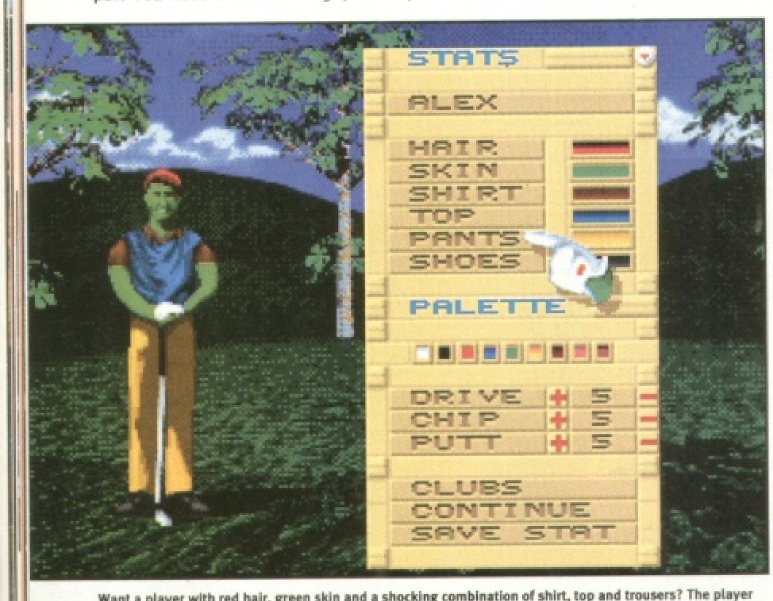
Everything about this game promises a lot but falls disappointingly short. It has plenty of courses but they aren't very different, it has speech and graphics but they aren't quite slick enough, and its camera views show great potential but deserve a better game than this. Without the cameras, Virtual Golf would be a pretty miserable contribution to the genre; as it stands, it's still far from a classic. The search for the perfect golf sim continues.



The four courses on offer are all in the British Isles: The Bowery, Kilmarney, Penperro and Carnoustie. The last two can only be played when you achieve the rank of professional.



On this preview screen you can choose whether to play all 18 holes, the front 9 or the back 9.



Want a player with red hair, green skin and a shocking combination of shirt, top and trousers? The player edit screen lets you do all of this and more.

THE SCOTTISH OPEN^{CD}

CORE DESIGN/IN-HOUSE
(01332) 297797
£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 10Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

All major soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- The irresistible appeal of a golf sim.
- Multi-player games and camera views extend its lifespan.

...AND THE BAD

- Very poor presentation, graphics and sound.
- Lacks some basic options.

Overall

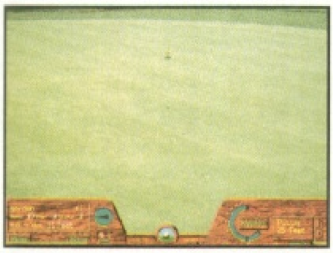
67%

Another page, another bloody golf game. Alex Simmons takes the long walk to the 19th hole.

Picture Perfect Golf CD

It's a close call, but Picture Perfect Golf (PPG) just about wins the battle of the golf sims — this month, anyway. The truth is, neither this nor Virtual Golf are any great shakes in the sim stakes. Core's effort has the advantage in terms of flexibility, variety of game styles and number of courses, PPG is better when it comes to graphics, sound and realism.

PPG only has one course (Harbour Town Golf Links), but it does it very well. Photographs of literally thousands of positions on the 18 individual holes have been digitized and put on CD, providing a realistic first-person viewpoint from wherever your ball lands. This photo-realism is both a strength and a weakness: it gives a convincing sense of actually being there, but lacks the variety and interest of Virtual Golf's camera views.



(Above) These pictures show the best and the worst of PPG's exquisite graphics. Thousands of course photographs give you all kinds of angles on the action, but the greens show little variation from one to the next.

(Below) Trees, water and mountainous bunkers are all displayed in morale-sapping 3D.

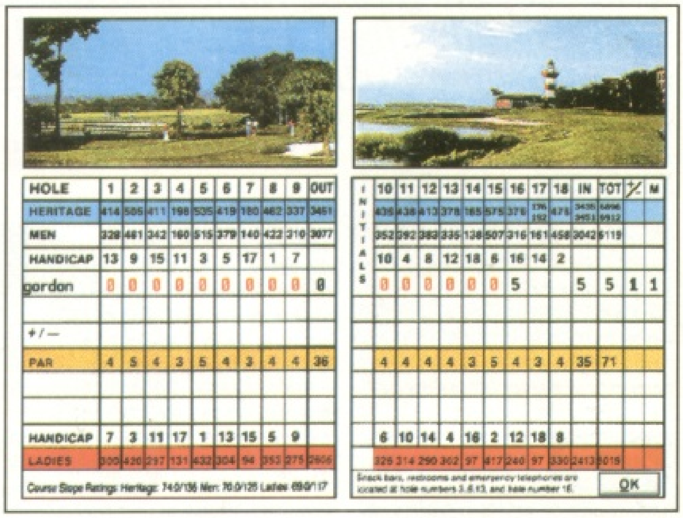
The main menu gives you a standard set of options. There's a driving range and practice green to get you familiar with the controls, a hall of fame showing course records, and a comprehensive statistics screen giving a detailed breakdown of your performance. You also get a pitifully small number of save game slots (three), some details about the links and minimal control over sound effects and commentary.

You play a round at one of three difficulty levels and from three different tee positions. Coupled with variable wind speeds, these parameters can have a dramatic effect on your performance. The action itself is typical: a swing meter determines the strength and accuracy of shot, and you have to take factors such as wind, ball lie and obstacles into account. You have a choice of normal, hook, slice and punch shots, and you can take a mulligan if you make a serious error.

PPG's style looks pretty but has plenty of limitations. For example, you don't get a hole fly-by, there are no instant replays and you can't change the viewing angle in any way. There's also too little animation — play from a bunker and you don't get a sand spray. Finally, the sheer number of photos means that you can only fit one course on a CD, so if you want to play the more interesting Coeur d'Alene links, you'll have to fork out another £15.

If you really must have a game with graphics like these and you don't mind forfeiting varied gameplay or finding extra cash for course disks, there's one good reason why PPG might be worth a look: it supports an Infra-red golf club. Empire hope to have some in stock by the release date, but if you can't wait that long a few are already available in the larger games stores for £100 each.

That's obviously a serious investment — but if you want to combine impressive graphical realism with the experience of swinging a club, the technology is here.



HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT
HERITAGE	414	505	411	198	535	419	180	462	337	3451
MEN	328	461	342	160	515	379	140	422	310	3077
HANDICAP	13	9	15	11	3	5	17	1	7	
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PAR	4	5	4	3	5	4	3	4	4	36
HANDICAP	7	3	11	17	1	13	15	5	9	
LADIES	300	420	297	131	432	304	94	353	275	2606

Course Slope Ratings: Heritage: 74.0/136 Men: 70.0/125 Ladies: 69.0/117

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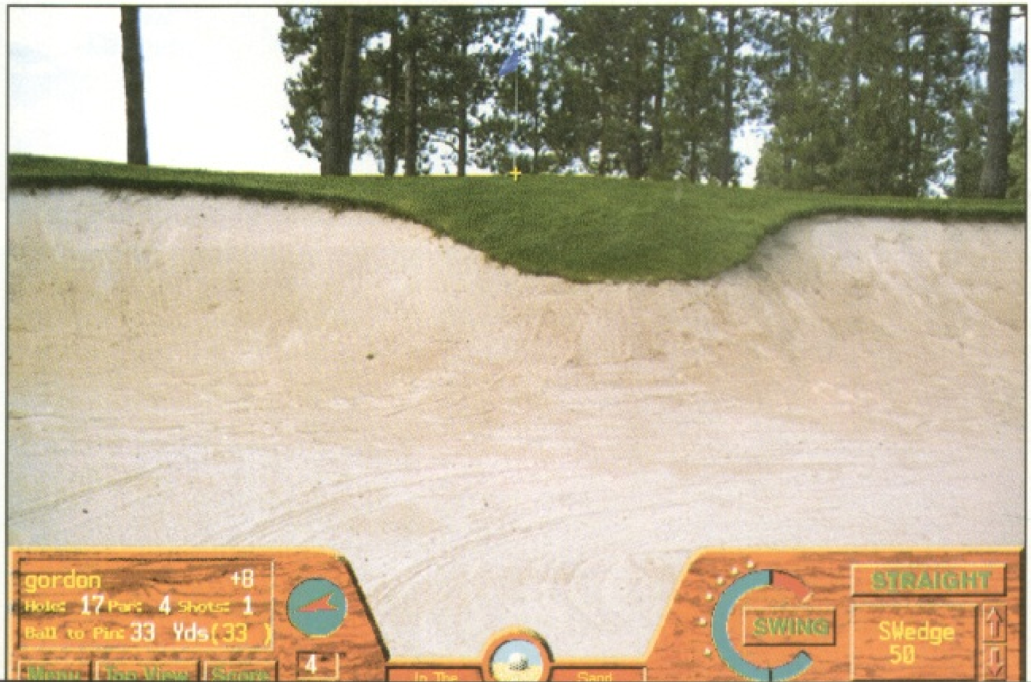
	6	10	14	4	16	2	12	18	8				
	326	314	290	302	97	417	240	97	330	2413	5019		

Snack bars, restrooms and emergency telephones are located at hole numbers 3,6,13, and hole number 16.

(Above) Your scorecard is the most important picture of all. Do well and you might want a printed copy, do magnificently and you'll win a place in the Hall Of Fame.



PICTURE PERFECT GOLF CD

EMPIRE INTERACTIVE/LYRIQ

(0181) 343 9143

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, SVGA, 2Mb RAM, 8Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Infra-red golf club; Sound Blaster soundcard.

THE GOOD...

- Superb graphical detail.
- Practice green and driving range..
- Infra-red club and extra courses available.

...AND THE BAD

- Only one course (and it's not a very exciting one).
- Annoying delays between shots.
- All the digitised greens are disappointingly similar.

Overall

72%

Simon The Sorcerer 2 CD

The Lion, the Wizard and the Wardrobe

David Upchurch grabs hold of his wand and gets saucy with Sordid the Sorcerer...

What is it about the villains of graphic adventure games? No matter how horribly they die at the end of a game, they always seem to get themselves resurrected just in time for the inevitable sequel. Old LeChuck the ghost pirate was brought back to life for Monkey Island 2, and Malcolm the evil jester was returned to the land of the living after being struck by a freak bolt of lightning at the start of Kyrandia 3.

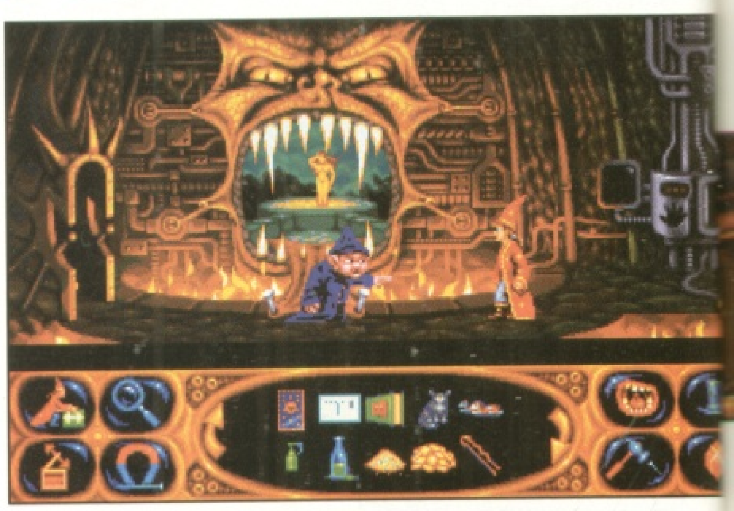
Simon the Sorcerer 2 is no different. The thoroughly evil Sordid, who met an uncomfortable death in the Fiery Pits of Rondor at the end of the first game, is back to cause all sorts of havoc in AdventureSoft's long-awaited follow-up to Simon the Sorcerer.

Simon, in case you don't remember it, was effectively Britain's answer to The Secret Of Monkey Island. It followed the adventures of a 14-year-old lad who found himself magically transported to a fantasy world populated by drunken dwarves, busty Valkyries and comedy wizards.

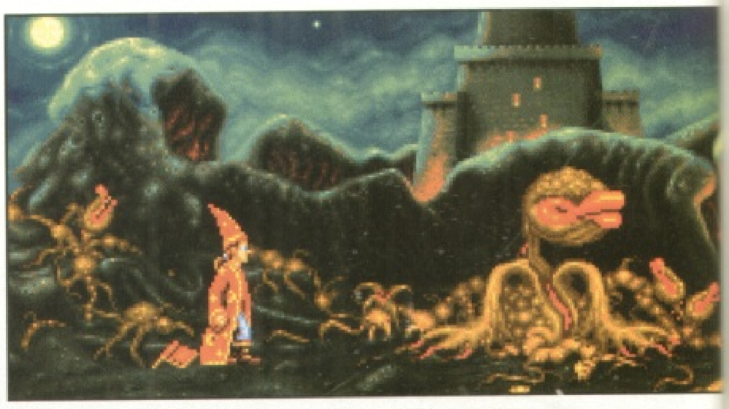
Yes, it was supposed to be funny, and no doubt AdventureSoft had great fun adding comic twists to all those fairytales and fables you had inflicted on you as a kid. It wasn't particularly original — even the point-'n'-click interface looked suspiciously like the SCUMM engine used by LucasArts — but hey, it was British, which meant that we didn't have to put up with jokes about Mom's Apple Pie and cheerleaders. Hurrah!

The whole game revolved around Simon's attempts to get back home, but the only person who could help him, the kindly Calypso, was being held captive by Sordid. Naturally, Sordid had to be disposed of, and Simon, though young, managed to outwit him. As a result, the first thing Sordid thinks about when he resumes his existence at the start of Simon 2, is revenge.

The sequel starts, predictably enough, with Sordid being brought back from the grave after an accident with an old spell book and a pentagram. Not surprisingly, Sordid is none too chuffed with young Simes, and arranges for the lad to be delivered to him in a magic wardrobe so that he can get his own back with red hot pincers, thumb screws and the like.



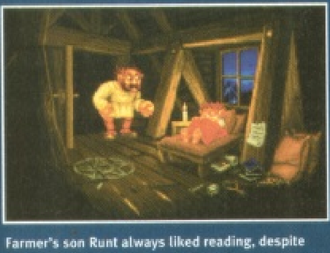
(Above) If you played the original Simon The Sorcerer, you'll remember those cheeky woodworm chappies who couldn't decide whether they wanted teak or oak for dinner. Well, they're back, and they've set up their own furniture business.



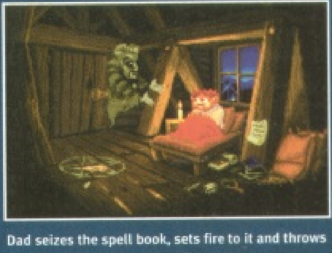
(Above) Man eating plants? Damn. If only I'd remembered to pack the Agent Orange.

Sordid Tricks

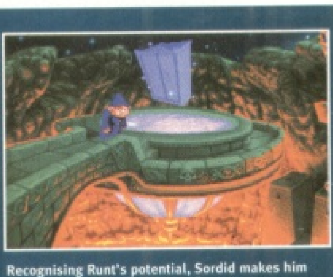
Simon the Sorcerer 2 has possibly the most contrived intro in the history of adventure games — but heck, it's funny, eh? Well no, actually. But you've got to start a game somehow, so here goes...



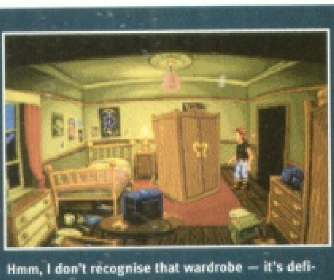
Farmer's son Runt always liked reading, despite the fact that his dad thought that it was a wimpish pursuit for a growing lad. Little did he know that his son was boning up on the occult...



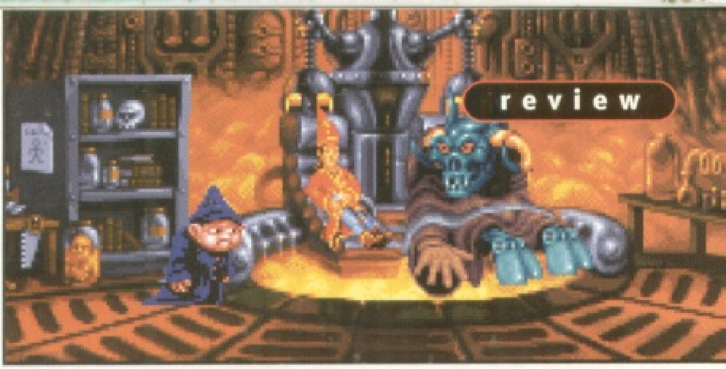
Dad seizes the spell book, sets fire to it and throws it onto the floor. But the book, which once belonged to Sordid, lands in the pentagram and Sordid comes back to life.



Recognising Runt's potential, Sordid makes him his apprentice. Runt's first task is to conjure a spell that will bring Simon back to Sordid's fortress, so that the sorcerer can get even

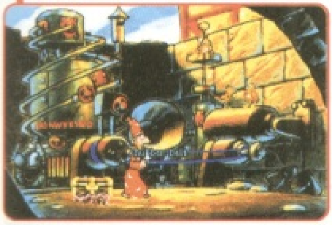


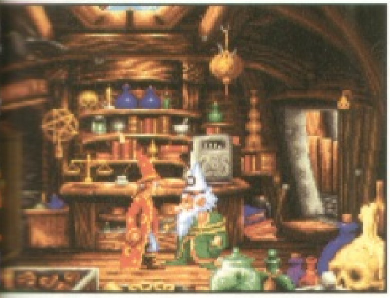
Hmm, I don't recognise that wardrobe — it's definitely not from Ikea... Simon checks out the mysterious new arrival and, rather unwisely, decides to have a look inside.



It's a bit like...

Yes, it definitely resembles Discworld — another 'comedy' adventure set in the world of wacky wizards and walking furniture. Discworld, though, has two advantages: it's based on Terry Pratchett's best-selling fantasy novels; and it features the voices of Eric Idle and Jon Pertwee. Beyond that, it's good as adventures go, but conversations are a little on the lengthy side.





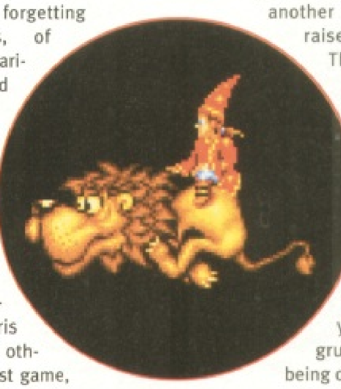
(Above) Oh dear. It looks as though someone has got the better of Calypso — and worse still, his granddaughter Alix has been kidnapped.

(Below) Ah yes, the three witches. Do I detect a Macbeth reference here?

Luckily for Simon, the spell goes horribly pear-shaped, and he finds himself outside Calypso's magic emporium rather than in Sordid's dungeon. But that leaves Simon with a problem. How does he get back home? The wardrobe, you see, is powered by something called Mucasade, and unfortunately the tank is as dry as a very dry thing.

Obviously, Simon's main quest for the game is to find some more Mucasade. As with most adventures, this isn't something that you can accomplish quickly and easily, and so you have to guide Simon through loads of linked puzzles and encounters.

The characters you'll meet include several old faces from the first game — the swampling, Gerald and Max the demons and not forgetting the woodworms, of course — and a variety of new and equally bizarre specimens. There's the mad pet shop owner, the guys from the loony society, the Lady of the Lake (who appears in a wetsuit), the morris dancers and many others. As with the first game, many of these are based on characters from well-known childrens' stories (including Goldilocks and the Three Bears, not to mention the Narnia books), but all have been given the Adventure Soft comedy touch.



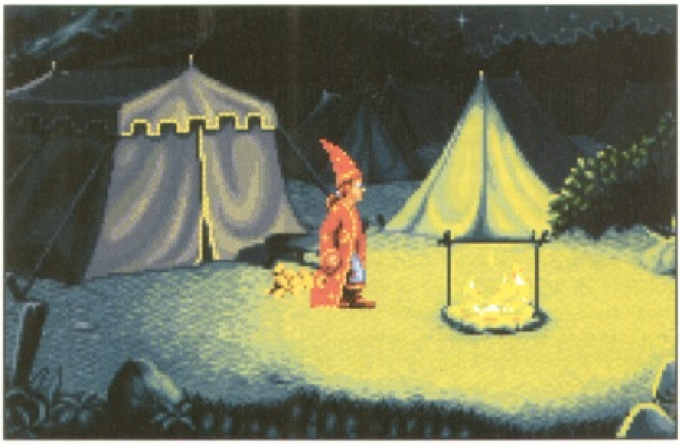
As for the puzzles, they're just ridiculous. You need to be more inventive than logical to solve them, and they quite often involve a number of different steps. Getting into the Royal Palace, for example, takes a lot of work: you need to win a magic contest, steal a joke book, make a stink bomb (for which you need the ingredients — another episode in itself), raise some cash and... The list goes on. Needless to say, this game is going to take a lot of solving — I still hadn't reached the climactic end sequence after several days of intensive, brain-straining play — so you definitely can't grumble about it all being over too quickly.

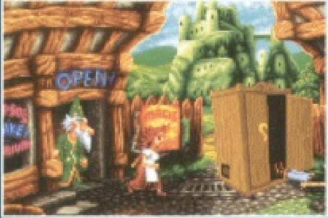
Puzzles aside, AdventureSoft has made numerous improvements to the original Simon game engine. The interface has been updated, so that verbs have been replaced with user-friendly icons and you can now locate all the important objects in a room by pressing the F10 key. On top of that, the graphics have been updated a tad, and there's now a swear button so that you don't have to listen to the more colourful language which surfaces in some of the dialogue.

And speaking of dialogue, if you played the CD-ROM version of Simon the Sorcerer, you'll remember that Chris Barrie (of Red Dwarf and Spitting Image fame) was the voice of Simon. Sadly, he wasn't available for the sequel, but Simon's new voice doesn't sound all that different so it's not a disaster by any means.

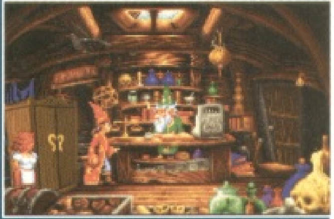
Simon The Sorcerer 2 is, on the whole, a well-balanced game. The graphics and music are pleasant, if not outstanding; the puzzles are suitably challenging; and there's a hell of a lot of game to wade through before you reach the closing credits. It isn't terribly original, and some of the humour is a bit hit and miss, but overall it's an entertaining experience.

Whilst I wouldn't rank Simon The Sorcerer 2 up there with Day Of The Tentacle or any of the other more recent LucasArts games, it does have a charm of its own and it'll definitely make fans of the original happy. Don't go expecting anything wildly innovative and you won't be disappointed.



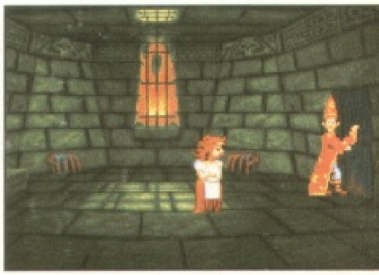


Luckily for him, the wardrobe arrives not at Sordid's dark fortress but outside the shop owned by his old friend and tutor, the wizard Calypso. How convenient.



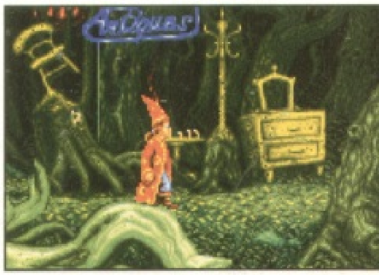
Turns out that the wardrobe is powered by a substance called Mucasade, but the tank is empty and Simon can't return home until he finds some. There must be some around here, mustn't there?

(Above) It's that old SF movie classic — the mind swap experiment. Simon and Sordid (attired in his neat Cyberdemon armour) exchange thoughts.



(Above) At last, Simon discovers where Alix has been imprisoned. But, er, how do they escape now?

(Below) Simon bumps into Runt, who has now succumbed thoroughly to Sordid's evil influence.



SIMON THE SORCERER 2^{CD}

ADVENTURESOFT/IN-HOUSE

(0121) 352 0847

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

40MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

All major soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- It's a big, big game.
- Loads of wacky puzzles.
- Genuine English humour!

...AND THE BAD

- It's not exactly original.
- The humour's a bit hit and miss.

Overall

86%

David Upchurch tests his heavy mettle with Neo's rock-'ard space blast-'em-up.

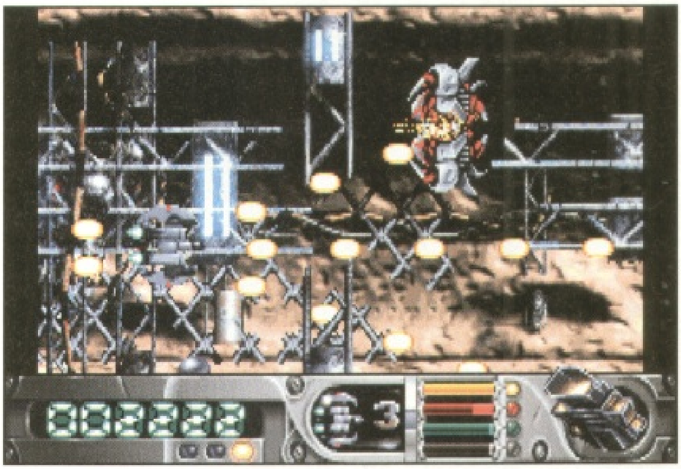
Prototype CD

If we know one thing about the Germans — at least, based on the games they produce, anyway — it's that they like a challenge. And Prototype, from Neo, just helps reinforce that belief; it's tougher than a conker that's been soaked in vinegar and baked in an oven — twice. Which is a pity, because if Prototype had only been a touch easier, it would've rated a lot higher than it has done.

Prototype is one of those increasingly rare PC releases — an unpretentious, no-nonsense action game. You are Earth's last defence against a fleet of hostile alien invaders (or something like that, anyway) and, as such, it's your job to navigate your ship through seven levels of horizontally-scrolling mayhem.

You start the game with a pathetic little damp squib of a gun that's as effective as a eunuch in a brothel. However, by collecting the pods left behind by blasted aliens, you can power-up one of your four on-board weapons: a three-way laser, a pulse cannon, a flamethrower and a homing-missile launcher. Each weapon has its own specific strengths and weaknesses, and it's up to you to decide how and when they should best be deployed.

At the end of each level there's the usual face-off with a giant super-alien and then you enter a sort of between-level sub-game, where you embark on a high-speed dash through a maze of space debris. The aim here is simple: avoid crashing into anything (fortunately there are no aliens to worry about).



Once you've powered-up your four onboard weapons to the *n*th degree, their powers of destruction become truly awesome. Heh-heh, the aliens won't stand a chance...

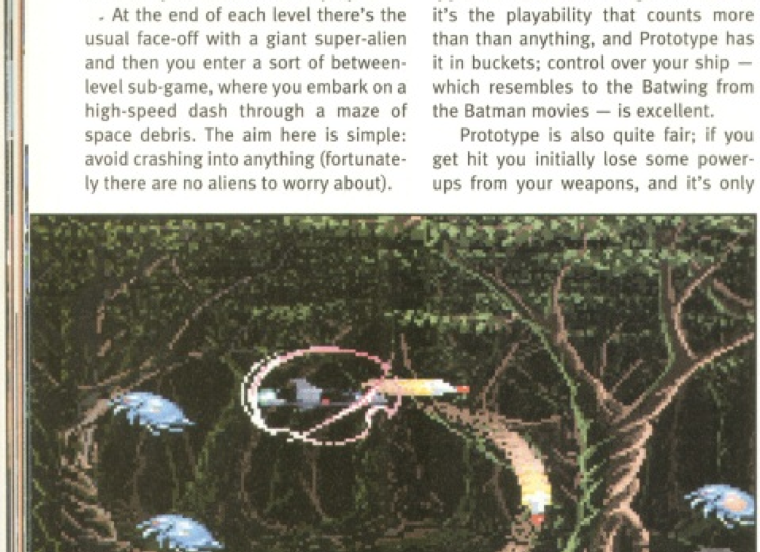
Okay, so Prototype would be unlikely to win any prizes in a Miss Originality '95 contest, but with a game like this it's the playability that counts more than than anything, and Prototype has it in buckets; control over your ship — which resembles to the Batwing from the Batman movies — is excellent.

Prototype is also quite fair; if you get hit you initially lose some power-ups from your weapons, and it's only when they're reduced to zero that you die. And, unlike some other shoot-'em-ups I could mention, it is possible (just about) to survive the alien onslaught with only your basic pea-shooter for protection, even on the later levels.

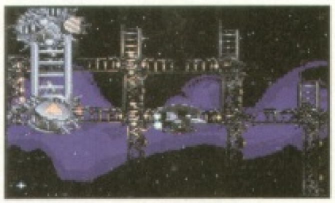
Prototype earns brownie points for its presentation too. Each level boasts up to six levels of parallax-scrolling scenery (i.e. objects that appear to be in the foreground scroll past faster than those that appear to be in the background), all accompanied by a 'soft metal'-style rock track pulled off CD. There are some nice rendered cut-scene 'rewards' between levels too, although they're very brief.

But the fly in the ointment is that stupid difficulty level. The action is fast, furious and frustrating — it took me *days* just to get past the first level. The aliens attack in such numbers and with such ferocity that you really ought to get a medal for surviving rather than just a measly cut-scene. Another downer is the lack of gameplay variety — although the graphics and music differ from level to level, the attack patterns of the aliens are very similar.

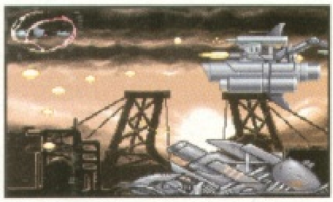
Overall, Prototype is a good, exciting blast. However, if you're looking for originality — or a relaxing, nerve-calming way of passing the odd spare half-an-hour — then stay away.



The second level sees you being attacked by the mutant lice from hell.



(Above) The inter-level sub-game is like a space-age version of Speed. Mind the oranges, Marlon!



The backgrounds for each level look stunning, thanks to the use of multiple layers of parallax.

PROTOTYPE CD

NEO/SURPRISE PRODUCTIONS

(01438) 840003

£34.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 24Mb of hard disk space and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick; joypad; Sound Blaster and Gravis UltraSound soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- Good, solid and very playable shoot-'em-up action.

...AND THE BAD

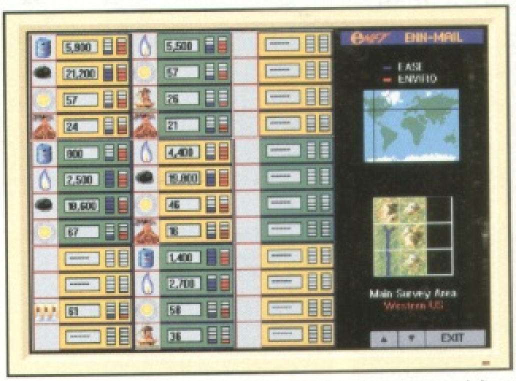
- Severely lacking in gameplay variety and originality.
- Even die-hard blastheads will find the going extremely tough.

Overall

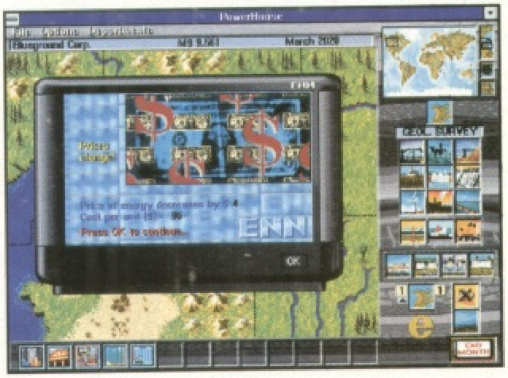
76%

PowerHouse CD

Alex Simmons looks at the wheelin'-dealin' world of big business in Impressions' newest strategy game.



It would appear that there's coal in dem dare hills, boy. Easy to get at and sitting there by the trainload. Rich pickings for the first people to start mining.



The presentation in Powerhouse is a cut above the norm that you normally get in strategy games. But don't let that fool you — this is a real brain-strainer.

PowerHouse is the latest in Impressions' long line of greed-mongering games, including Airbucks, Detroit, High Seas Trader and Ultimate Soccer Manager. However, the difference between this and its pedecessors is the sophistication of the game itself. VGA graphics give way to SVGA, still screens get replaced by video cut-scenes (in part, at least), and there's plenty more gameplay to get to grips with in a money-grabbing clammy hands kind of way.

The basic idea behind Powerhouse is that you are the president of a multi-national corporation trading in and extracting energy sources from coal and gas, as well as solar power and nuclear powerstations, with the aim being to become the richest company after 100 years. You get a map for surveying and building, and a mass of icons with which to go about your business. Pretty standard stuff.

The number of different things you can do, though, and the freedom the game allows youto do them is impressive, right up to sabotaging rivals' equipment and dealing in various shares to benefit you and impoverish them. This is all run by an economic model based on UN predictions, and feels very damn thorough.

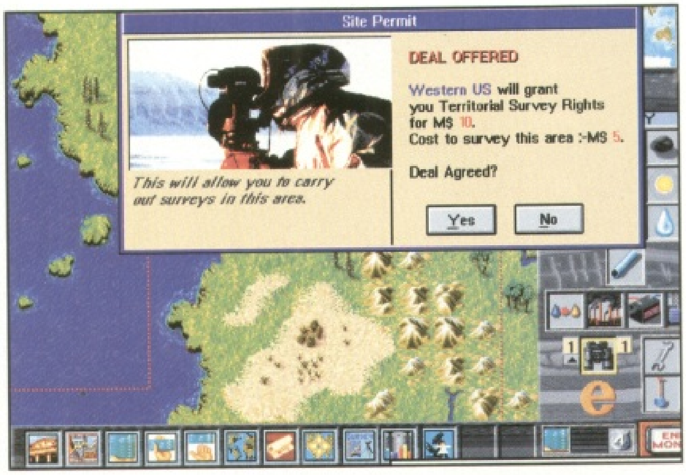
The technical level is especially impressive considering that this is a Windows game. Windows isn't well known for its great gaming potential but, thanks to a new tool called WinG (that Impressions have been one of the first to put to the test), I am pleasantly surprised by the quality of the game. It's as slick and playable as if it had been a normal DOS game, although not every DOS game is a winner by any stretch of the imagination — and PowerHouse certainly doesn't come away as the perfect gaming experience.

The problems with PowerHouse start after you've been playing it for a while. The number of options in each menu, the amount of different things to consider, and the knock-on effects of each action (whether by you or the opposition) mean that your brain will start to boil after an hour or two. Pretty soon you'll be spending ages just figuring out whether spending a bit of dosh on a drilling survey is the best use of resources.

And after a few days of heavy-duty decision making you'll inevitably make some fatal mistake, thus letting the other companies get the upper hand, at which point you might as well give up. In this respect the multi-player option is a boon, as at least it puts each human player at the same disadvantage. But the sheer complexity of the gameplay means that this is more akin to a chess-like intellectual challenge than an enjoyable business sim.

Rather than helping matters, the interface makes things worse. The number of charts and screens you need to access to keep an overall picture is somewhat excessive, especially since the full potential of using layered Windows screens isn't put to good use; individual windows replace each other instead of being movable and scaleable, so you can't keep lots of them on-screen together. An opportunity missed, perhaps.

Overall, then, PowerHouse follows the concept of something like Pizza Tycoon or even Transport Tycoon, without ever being quite as enjoyable either. Of course, if both of those didn't offer you enough of a corporate challenge, then PowerHouse will certainly get the old grey matter churning. One thing you'll soon learn is that running a big business isn't *quite* as easy as Bill Gates makes it seem.

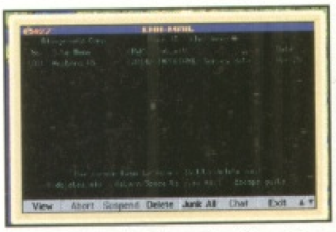


DEAL OFFERED

Western US will grant you Territorial Survey Rights for M$ 10.
Cost to survey this area :-M$ 5.

Deal Agreed?

This will allow you to carry out surveys in this area.



(Above) Yes, e-mail. The internet has hit even the world of multinational corporation boardrooms. (Well, you've seen Disclosure, haven't you?) Survey results and political happenings come through thick and fast after a little while.

(Left) Sheesh, those guys in silly suits get expensive. $15million for one lousy survey — and they'll take months researching it, too. Must be a trade union thing.

POWERHOUSE CD

IMPRESSIONS/IN-HOUSE
(0181) 789 0329
£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, SVGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, Windows 3.1 and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

All Windows-compatible soundcards; Hayes modem.

THE GOOD...

- Looks very impressive, with some nice cut-scene graphics.
- Plenty of gameplay for would-be business sharks to get their corporate teeth into.

...AND THE BAD

- The gameplay soon gets overly confusing, swamping you in options and details.
- After a while it gets all very samey.

Overall

76%

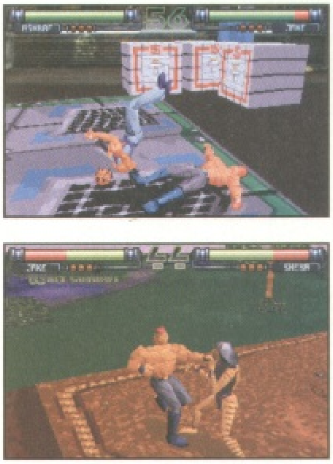
PC GAMES STAR

FX Fighter CD

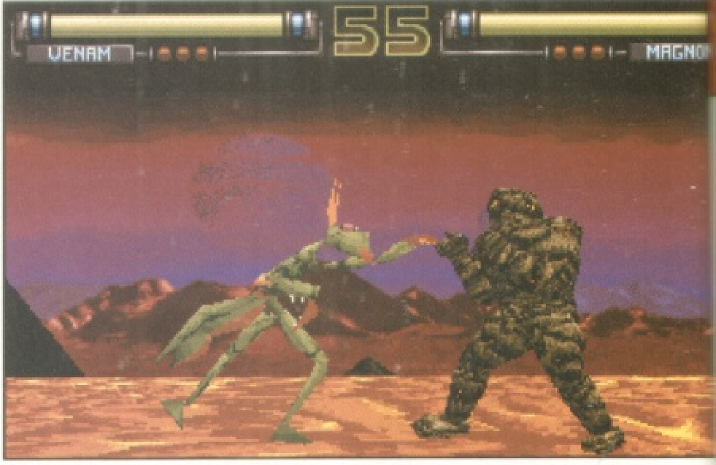
Alex Simmons does battle with GTE Interactive's top-looking beat-'em-up.

Longtime PC owners may have noticed those impudent console pups are now measuring up their six-button dimwit machines to our mighty intellect-straining wonder mainframes. Indeed, in some cases they're claiming that certain new consoles (i.e. the Saturn and the PlayStation) actually surpass the PC in terms of games quality and variety. And they're deliberately playing on a PC weak spot, citing 3D beat-'em-ups such as Virtua Fighter and Tekken as the future of gaming. Bah! We'll show those foul dogs what power means! Bring me the 90MHz Pentium Igor, and be quick about it!

Right.... [Lightning strikes the weathervane atop Castle PC GAMES, the Pentium shudders into life]. Ha-ha, my creation! My beautiful monster! Let me see what you can do! [Frantic scrabbling around in the New Games Drawer]. Aaah, FX Fighter, the first fully 3D fisticuffs frenzy for PC — the first of many! Soon our software hordes will descend upon the Earth and... but enough of this. Install it Igor, and be careful not to delete all my backed-up Plumbers Don't Wear Ties save games!



Two bop-packed scenes from the Inter-FX Fighter Disco Challenge. Honest.

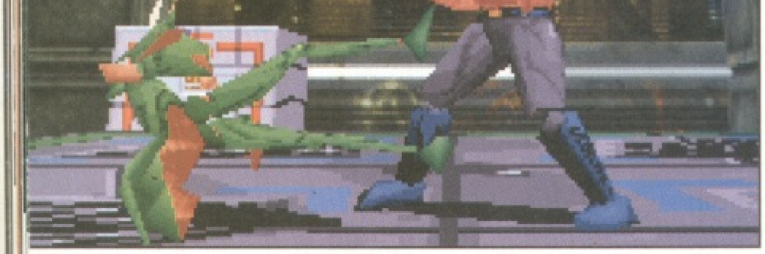


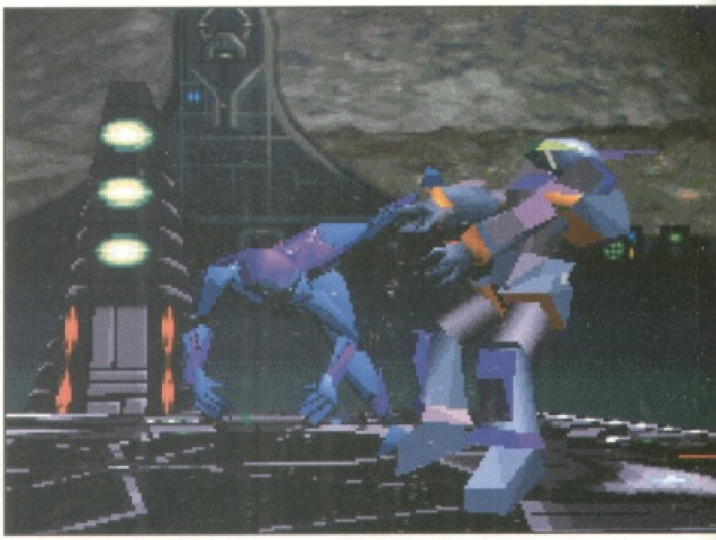
The insecty-like chap is Venam, who speaks in Insect when he wins. If you translate the clicks he makes it comes out as "Dave Upchurch has a willy like an acorn." It does — it's TRUE.

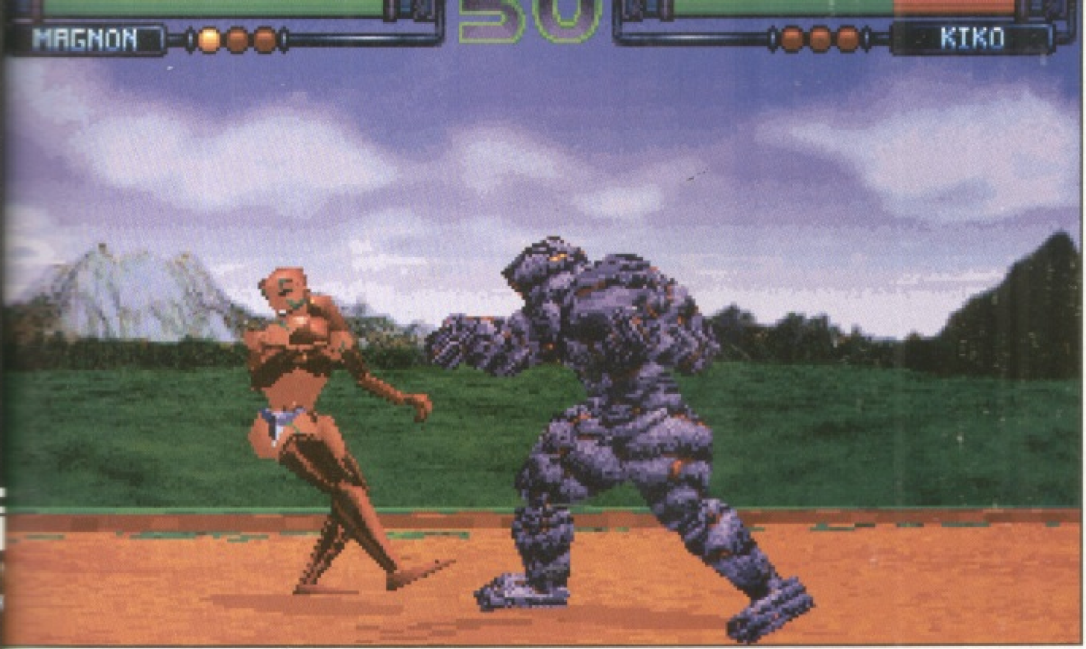
A-ha! Just as I suspected! A super-pretty rendered intro, complete with speech, plot bits and sinister evil end-of-game boss character explaining what's going on and acting all scary! And you thought only consoles... Oh look, let's just forget the mad scientist routine, alright? I really can't be arsed with it any more.

What we're looking at here, though, is definitely the PC's first attempt to clone a so-called Next Generation console genre. Now the consoles producing this sort of software have lots of custom hardware and suchlike to help them produce the effects, so how does a straightforward PC, built as nature intended, cope?

"Pretty well" is the answer which springs immediately to mind. The game design more than lives up to expectations. Take control of one of eight different alien characters, each championing their planet, in a tournament where the losers watch their worlds obliterated. As you may expect each of the characters has their own strengths, weaknesses and complement of special moves. The special attacks are performed using various sequences of joypad directions with a button press at the end, although the strings of commands are more in the Mortal Kombat forward-back-forward vein than the rounded flowing joypad movements of Streetfighter.







Wa-hey! Eh? Eh? Look at that — that lass is wearing all kinky underwear and that. Hur-hur. Skrelp.

SHEBA
VS
CYBEN

Of course, as is *de rigeur* these days, most of these moves are used as openers for combos, strings of attacks which are (supposedly) unblockable — unless you happen to know a counter move (or combo-breaker, jargon fans). Obviously the specials are graded, so the most strategically-useful moves, like projectile attacks, usually do the least damage and the most powerful routines are the hardest to pull off, unless you're some kind of strange alien mutant with thirteen joints on each finger, or a brain which plugs directly into a joystick port.

Because FX Fighter has been limited to only two buttons (one for punch, one for kick) the programmers have had to 'bury' some of the specials, as there aren't enough possible strings of joypad commands to cover them. This means that FX Fighter has pretty excellent combo potential, as each move you perform has a second range of specials inside it, and on and on until you're into double figures, if you're good enough.

This means arcade fans have plenty of combos to exhaust themselves digging out and writing in to magazines with, while useless old people who've never played games before will end up with very badly blistered fingers as the joypad D-button tappers to and fro and punch and kick buttons are hammered with increasingly ferocity.

Actually, this is where you encounter the first stumbling block of FX Fighter. As the joypad commands are all along similar lines and some require a pretty lengthy number of commands to be keyed in, you'll find that there's a lot of wrist work involved.

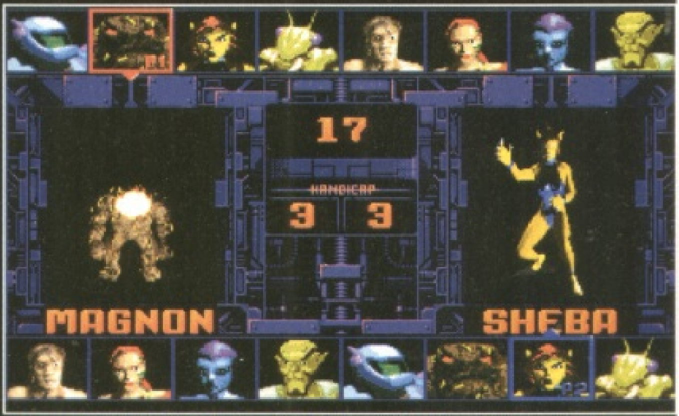
The easiest way to prove this is to listen to someone playing the game. The (admitedly atmospheric and somewhat ace) music and effects are all but drowned out by a cacophony of clicks and taps as the beleaguered player wrestles furiously with the pad. Alright if you're a concert pianist, but pretty hard on the rest of us.

But don't be too put off — FX Fighter still has a lot more going for it than it has against it. The graphics are rather smart, with the scratchy 3D polygon visuals which 'graced' the preview versions of the game smoothed out and texture mapped attractively. The animation is also worthy of mention, not just for its smoothness but for the personality and characterisation it adds to each of the fighters.

But at the end of the day it's that all-important playability that counts, cliché fans, and FX Fighter is lucky enough to possess it in green-makingly enviable quantities. It's not quite as hot as the aforementioned arcade triumphs Virtua Fighter and Tekken, but given as this is the only option PC owners have in the field it's certainly no let-down. Not everyone's cup of blood, granted, but if you've got the taste for some Next Generation-stylee gaming goonery this is as close as you could wish for right now.

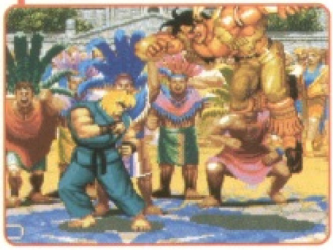
20,000 Leagues (Or Thereabouts)

FX Fighter has a tournament mode which allows up to eight — count 'em, EIGHT — players to take part in a tournament at once. Each player picks a character, types in their name, and the computer produces a league table match-up, with each of the participants battling their way towards the final, and the golden prize of lording it up over the other hard-luck Johnny No-skill types.



It's a bit like...

...Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo from GameTek, I suppose, if I'm pushed to make a comparison. To be fair the only similarity between the two is that they're both fighting games — other than that they couldn't be more different. As you can see, FX Fighter uses 3D polygons to depict the action, whereas SSF2T uses standard bitmap sprites. Although FX Fighter is great, SSF2T has the slight edge in the playability and sheer fun stakes.



FX FIGHTER$^{\text{CD}}$

GTE Interactive/Argonaut

(0171) 911 3000

£44.99 Out Now

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 18Mb of hard disk space and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick; joypad; all major soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- Lovely lovely graphics.
- Lovely lovely animation.
- Lots of moves and battery.

...AND THE BAD

- RSI-inducing freneticism
- Really need more than one player to enjoy it fully.

Overall

90%

PC GAMES STAR

David Upchurch finds a strange parallel between scratchcards and Virgin's new action/strategy game.

Command & Conquer CD

Although I'm not a member of Gambler's Anonymous or anything like that, I'll admit that I enjoy the odd flutter now and again. So the other day, lured by the promise of a £10,000 jackpot, I bought a scratchcard from my friendly neighbourhood cornershop. (It wasn't a Lottery scratchcard, incidentally — the proceeds went straight to a local children's charity rather Sir Winston Churchill's holiday fund.)

Anyway, some time later, sitting in the comfort of my local pub, I took out the aforementioned scratchcard and my 'lucky' tuppence, and started to chip away at the silvery film covering three windows. First a bell was revealed... Then another bell... And then — gulp! — another bell... Bloody hell, I thought, I've won a tenner! Cue one enormous beer session, in which the windfall was duly frittered away.

What relevance, wonders the ever-curious reader, has this got to Command & Conquer, the new game from Westwood Studios? Lots, as it happens, because playing C&C was a lot like scraping away at that scratchcard. Action-orientated strategy gameplay... Simple point-'n'-click player interface... A rare mineral that has to be harvested to raise cash... Bloody hell, I thought, I'm playing Dune 2! Cue one enormous all-night gaming session, in which all hope of sleep was duly frittered away.

Given that Westwood also wrote that old classic (currently available on budget), perhaps I shouldn't have been so surprised by the similarities. However, unlike Interplay's WarCraft, another Dune 2-alike which was released a few months back, C&C isn't just the same game all over again but with a change of graphics and plot, not by a long chalk. Instead, it's Dune 2 with more bells, whistles and shiny knobs embellishing it than you could find in a massive bells, whistles and shiny knobs discount warehouse — a Dune 3, if you will.

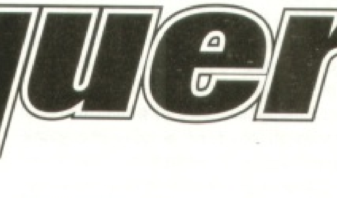
Whereas Dune 2 revolved around rival 'Houses' battling for valuable Spice on the planet Arrakis, C&C is set on the good ol' planet Earth, where the the opposing factions of GDI and NOD fight for control of regions containing the rare mineral Tyberium. (Okay, so it doesn't sound that different so far — but bear with me.)

Having chosen which side you want to fight for — the NOD are the nominal 'baddies', so the default is the GDI — you then embark upon a series of self-contained missions. Unlike Dune 2, C&C has a strong plot running through it, with each mission connected to the next by some exceptionally good cut-scenes featuring a blend of renders and blue-screened actors.

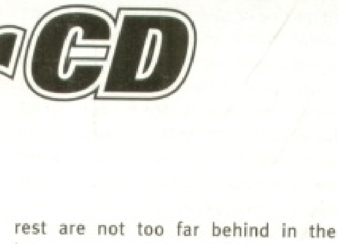
Indeed, I'd go so far as to say that they're the best cut-scenes I've ever seen. They're certainly some of the most action-packed and spectacular — the jumbo jet crashing into the top of a Middle Eastern minaret is superb, and rest are not too far behind in the impressiveness stakes either.

Before each mission there's a short briefing from some commanding stiff in a suit, and then the fun really starts. As with Dune 2, you start each mission with just a handful of troops, a couple of vehicles and buildings, and a big black screen, the idea being that the surrounding landscape is only revealed as and when you send out your forces to explore it.

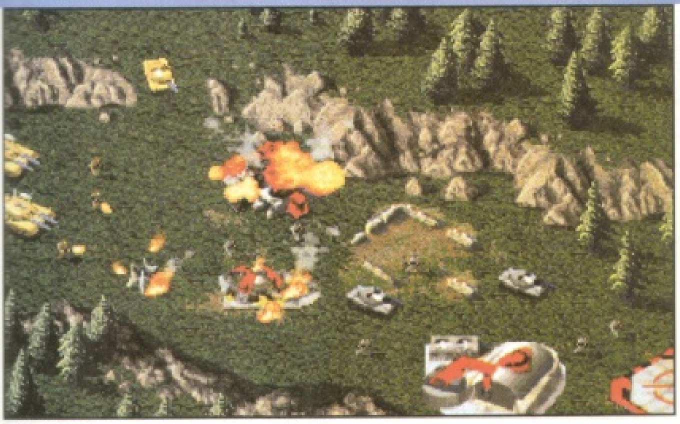
As with Dune 2, everything — and I stress, *everything* — is controlled with the mouse. If you're used to strategy games where you have to remember a list of key commands as long as your arm before you can get anywhere, then C&C will be a revelation. To move a unit



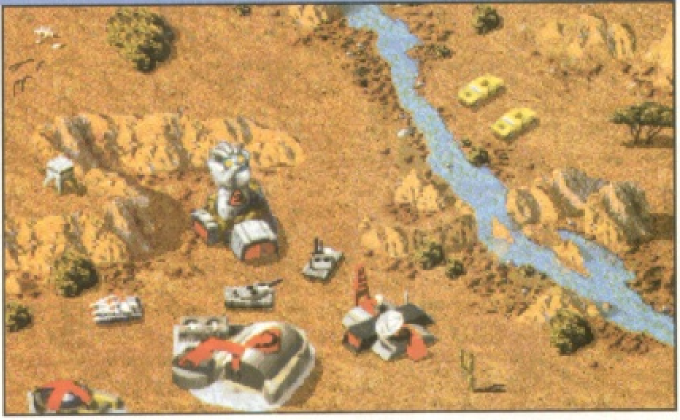
(Above) A flamethrower tank solves the illegal parking problem in one of C&C's top cut-scenes.



(Above) My tiny troopers disembark at the D-Day re-enactment society's annual family day.



(Above) My all-conquering GDI forces sweep into enemy's base camp and start causing all manner of grisy, violent unpleasantness. Take that, NOD-dy!



(Above) Oh, it all looks nice and peaceful at the moment, but see there — two of my tanks are approaching from the north-east. In a couple of minutes' time this place will be a raging warzone.

around, you simply click on it and then click on where you want it to go. If you want a unit to attack something, you click on it and then the target. Groups of units can be given the same order by holding down the mouse and dragging a 'box' around them.

Each unit is 'intelligent'; that is, you don't have to tell your forces to do absolutely everything. If the enemy forces start attacking a lone trooper lost out in no-man's land that you've callously forgotten about, he'll fight back if the odds are reasonable or scarper if they're not.

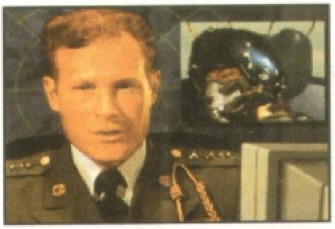
But there's more to C&C than just moving your units about, shooting the enemy and blowing things up; there's also a heavy resource management element. Using the scrolling menus to the side of the game window you can start constructing new buildings (barracks, heavy weapons plants, Tyberium refineries, etc) and vehicles (tanks, armoured personnel carriers, attack trikes, etc), as well as train new infantrymen to swell your army.

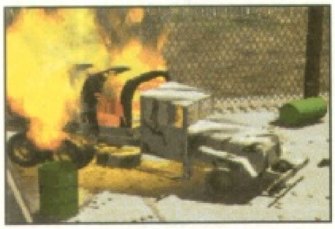
However, all this costs — which is why Tiberium is so important. By 'harvesting' this vital mineral (you'll normally find rich deposits of it somewhere in the vicinity) you can raise cash with which to finance your war effort. And the more money you have, the better the quality and effectiveness of the buildings and equipment you can buy.

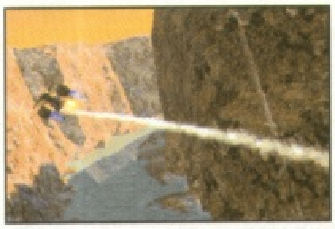
On paper all this may not sound that exciting, but in practice it's as adrenaline-inducing as any race game or shoot-'em-up. One of the few complaints levelled at Dune 2 was that there was too much time spent building up your resources and not enough actually rucking. In C&C the balance has been tipped the other way, and it's a much better game for it. I can't think of one mission where I had to wait more than a couple of minutes for a fight to start.

There's a greater range of vehicles and buildings to experiment with too, including attack choppers and even a one-shot, use-it-wisely orbiting ion cannon! Fortunately, however, they're all introduced gradually as the game progresses, so you're not swamped with options as soon as the game begins.

Westwood has also made some major overhauls to its computer Artificial Intelligence routines, so that the game offers a more steadily-paced challenge than Dune 2 did. And there's even a multi-player link-up option for armchair generals who want to fight it out over the phonelines.





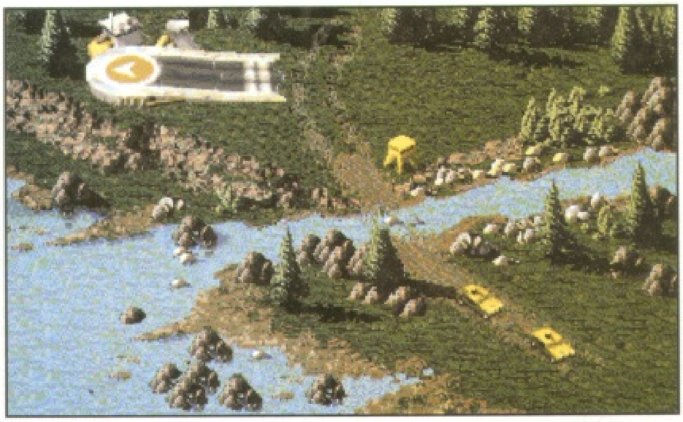


(Above) Your hunky commander-in-chief gives you a short, snappy but still pretty snooze-some mission briefing detailing the task that lies ahead. Although nicely presented, these bits are pretty redundant — the objective of most missions is simply to wipe out the enemy forces.

(Right & above right) A couple more examples of C&C's exceptional cut-scenes. Oooh, it's almost like watching the news on the telly.

Finally — and as you can see from the screenshots — C&C looks a 100-times better than Dune 2 ever did. The detail and animation of the sprites, especially the troopers, is exceptional. The sound is nifty too, with plenty of bangs for your bucks accompanied by a suitably ominous, pulsing soundtrack.

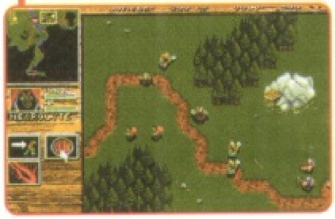
If there are any complaints at all it's that, when all is said and done, C&C really is Dune 3 rather than a totally new gaming experience. But as anyone who's played Dune 2 will tell you, recommendations don't come much higher than that.



(Above) The attention to detail in the vehicle and background graphics is superb. I mean, look at this screenshot — it could almost be a photograph.

It's a bit like...

...WarCraft, which in turn was a bit like Dune 2. However, rather than simply being the same game with a fresh lick of paint, C&C features a whole host of tweaks and embellishments, including improved graphics, better AI, greater range of vehicles and buildings and some *fantastic* cut-scenes.



COMMAND & CONQUER^{CD}

VIRGIN INT./WESTWOOD

(0181) 960 2255

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM **SPEC**

33MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

All major soundcards.

*THE **GOOD**...*

- Essentially the sequel to Dune 2 that you always dreamed of.
- A super-strong, long-lasting and surprisingly varied challenge.
- Looks absolutely brilliant and sounds even better.

*...AND THE **BAD***

- I could be picky and moan about something trivial, but I'm not going to.

Overall

92%

Striker '95 CD

Fed up with waiting for the new football season to start, Dave Upchurch turns to Rage's latest ball game for comfort.

Those of you who've been craving a sequel to Striker for the past two years can finally relax. Striker '95 is here, on CD-ROM, and it's bigger, better, more. It's still not a great footy game, though - like its predecessor, it fails to live up to its early promise. In terms of Premiership strikers, it's more Dean Holdsworth than Alan Shearer.

The promise is offered by the pre-match presentation. After a dinky animated intro which leads you through some great moments in recent footy history (Chris Waddle's many penalty misses are nowhere to be seen, alas), you're confronted with a bank of menu options. This lets you choose between five kinds of match, practice mode, team editor, loading a saved game and a list of options.

The five game styles on offer are Friendly (instant action), Championship (32 of the best teams with up to four human players), League (up to 32 teams), Knockout (32 teams again) and World Cup. There's also a practice mode, which gives you the chance to attempt penalty shoot-outs and lets you hone your ball skills on the pitch without having another team running around on the pitch, hassling you.

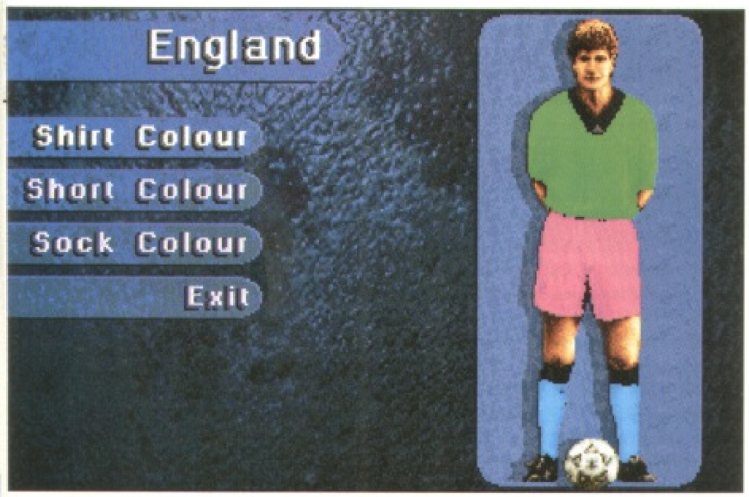
The team editor is Striker '95's most comprehensive feature. Over 5,000 players and 300 national and international teams are included, and you can radically alter every footballer by changing his hairstyle, nose, eyes and position in the team. If you get a kick out of creating a squad of players all of whom have Paul Walsh's hair and Ian Dowie's nose, this is for you.

In addition, you can rename your squad, instruct them to play in one of eight formations and six styles, and even change their strip. Actually, this last option isn't quite as good as it first seems: you get all kinds of plain kits in lurid colours, but there are no stripes, hoops, halves or quarters to choose from. Renaming the squads isn't much fun, either. All the players have 'alternative' names (e.g. Alan Sharar), and it takes a lot of effort and patience to change them.

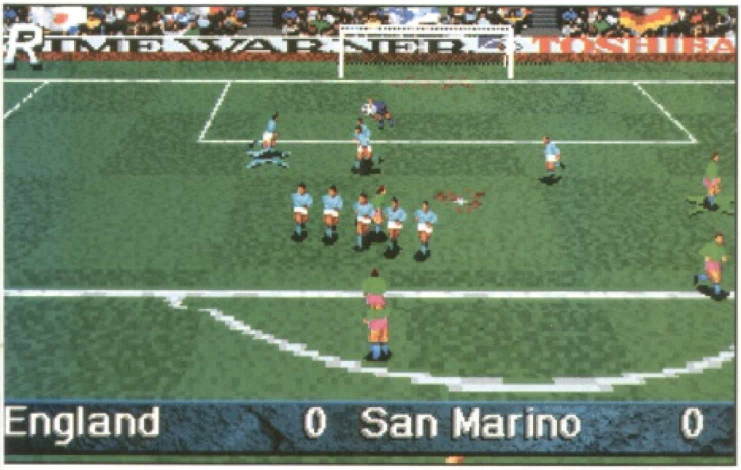
The footy itself is a bit disappointing. The choice of indoor and outdoor pitches is a good one because there's a genuine difference in the way they play, but other options are far from useful. Match lengths vary from 2 to 10 minutes (why can't you play longer?), there's in-game commentary from Andy Gray (not as annoying as you might think), and you get some pretty pointless video clips before kick-offs, goal-kicks, throw-ins and corners. You don't get varied weather conditions, though.

The controls are fine as long as you have a joystick; with keys it's tough. The ball sticks to the feet and passing isn't easy, but the player selection is fairly intelligent and the goalkeepers aren't stupid. You also get post-shot control, special shots and headers, neat set-pieces and instant replays.

There are two main problems, though. The pitch view is too limited to allow flowing moves and doesn't let you hoof the ball upfield with any certainty, and the ball tends to skid off the turf too easily. Striker '95 has plenty of nice touches, but it's got a very long way to go before it dethrones the fab Sensible Soccer.



Striker 95's team editing facility is pretty good. Not only can you change the players' strips, you can also change their names and faces, too.

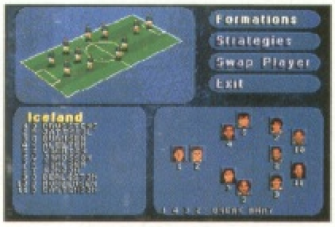


Even without Stuart Ripley on the right wing, San Marino should pose no problems for England. Mind you, that's what they said about Norway...

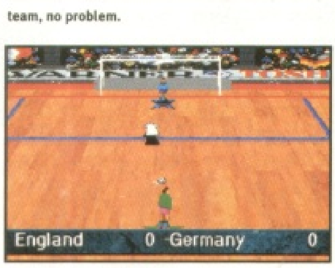
France 1 Romania 0

45:00
France 0 Romania 0

Phew! Just look at the texture-mapping on that! Shame the gameplay doesn't match the graphics...



Footy strategy is covered by the formation editor and match tactics menus. If you want to recreate Blackburn's 4-4-2 counter-attacking Championship team, no problem.



It's the 1990 World Cup semi-final penalty shoot-out between England and West Germany all over again... but this time it's indoors.

STRIKER '95

TIME WARNER INT./RAGE

(01604) 602 800

£34.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

20MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 14Mb of hard disk space, single CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick; all major soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- Comprehensive team editing facility.
- Choice of outdoor and indoor games.
- Two-player mode guarantees long-term interest.

...AND THE BAD

- The action is a bit frantic.
- The pitch view is too restricted.

Overall

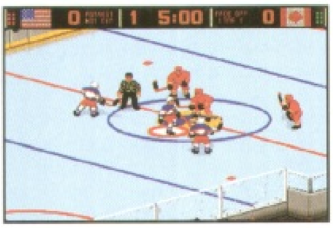
74%

Merit Studios politely tell David Upchurch to puck off.

Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95^{CD}

If you don't follow ice hockey in Britain the name Alex Dampier will mean little to you. This isn't his fault, so I'll tell you a bit about him. Dampier was born in Canada, and since 1978 he's been involved with Murrayfield, Nottingham, Sheffield and the England Under 21s. Since 1989 he's coached the English national team with increasing success, so he's no mug.

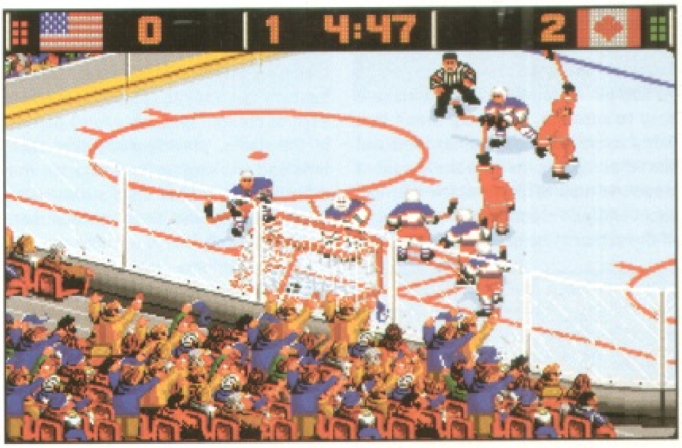
Neither is the hockey sim which bears his name. It begins with an FMV intro and doesn't look back. For starters, there's a comprehensive list of presentation features which includes detailed player stats, a coaching-only option, sporadic in-game commentary, a choice of international teams, and league and tournament games.



The action is presented in attractive isometric-3D, a perspective which (initially) I found more confusing than Brett Hull's vertically-scrolling viewpoint, particularly in two-player mode. Variable control options and rules allow you to make the competition as easy or difficult as you like, and the period length can be set at anything between one and 20 minutes.

Details such as realistic puck inertia, the ability to rough, sin bins, saved match highlights and instant replay options spice things up, but weak crowd noises and a lack of in-game effects let the side down. The quality of the computer opponents isn't always as high as it should be, either.

The same could be said of the game as a whole. There are literally dozens of interesting features and the whole package is quite slick, but it lacks a cutting edge when the players go out onto the ice.



ALEX DAMPIER PRO

Merit Studios/In-house

(0191) 460 6060

£39.95 Out Now

MINIMUM **SPEC**

25MHz 386, SVGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Joystick; Sound Blaster soundcard.

*THE **GOOD...***

- Plenty of puck-slapping fun.
- Comprehensive list of options and statistics.

*...AND THE **BAD***

- In-game isometric perspective takes some getting used to.
- Crowd noises are a bit weak.

Overall

73%

Davcid Upchurch gets his skates on (again) in Accolade's sim.

Brett Hull Hockey 95^{CD}

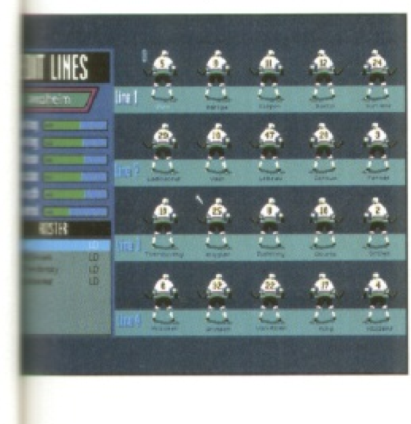
An interesting fact: ice hockey is the biggest indoor spectator sport in Britain. Not that there's exactly much competition from the likes of basketball, athletics and darts, but it's still an achievement of some description. The fact that the matches I've seen have often been an excuse for a good fight is irrelevant: the sport's popularity is growing.

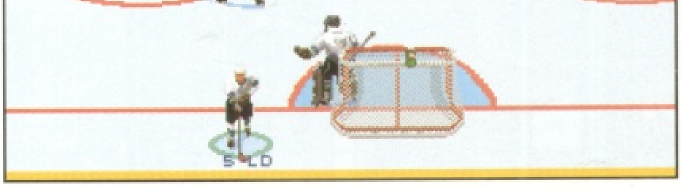
Anyway, of this month's two offerings, Brett Hull Hockey '95 (BH95) just manages to scrape a narrow victory in overtime. The game is based on NHL teams and includes all the statistics from the 93-94 season. You have a choice of one- or two-player head-to-head games, a one-player season (11, 42 or 84 games) or the end-of-season playoffs (3, 5 or 7 games).

Before the match begins you can edit the lines, fiddle around with the rules to set the level of realism, and toggle the commentary, music and sound effects. There's also a simple coaching screen where you determine your team's strengths and weaknesses in six skill categories.

The action is very impressive, with realistic movement, a variety of penalties, three types of shot, two kinds of check, intelligent opponents and a host of additional presentation features, including six custom speed settings. A video recorder lets you study replays during timeouts, and at the end of the game there's a full list of match and player stats.

Though its graphics might not look as impressive as those in Alex Dampier, BH95 is faster, more realistic and ultimately more fun.





BRETT HULL HOCKEY '95^{CD}

Warner Int./Accolade

(0171) 391 4318

£39.99 Out Now

MINIMUM **SPEC**

33MHz 486, SVGA, 4Mb RAM, 15Mb of hard drive space, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Joystick; joypad; Sound Blaster soundcard.

*THE **GOOD...***

- Realistic graphics and sound effects.
- Lots and lots and lots of interesting presentation features.

*...AND THE **BAD***

- In-game commentary can sound odd.

Overall

88%

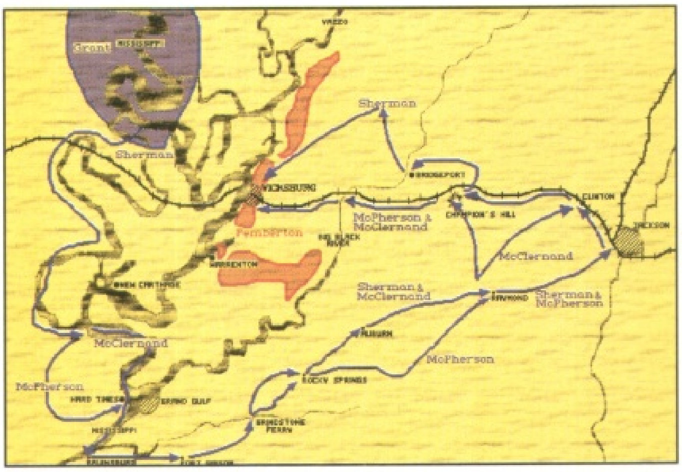
Civil War CD

To the tune of his favourite military band, Davi Upchurch draws up his battle lines in Empire's corking new strategy game.

A little while back our dear American cousins had a little disagreement amongst themselves and ended up slaughtering each other in their thousands. Now the same team that brought you Fields Of Glory, a fine strategy game in its own right, have ramped up the game engine to represent the Civil War on a PC.

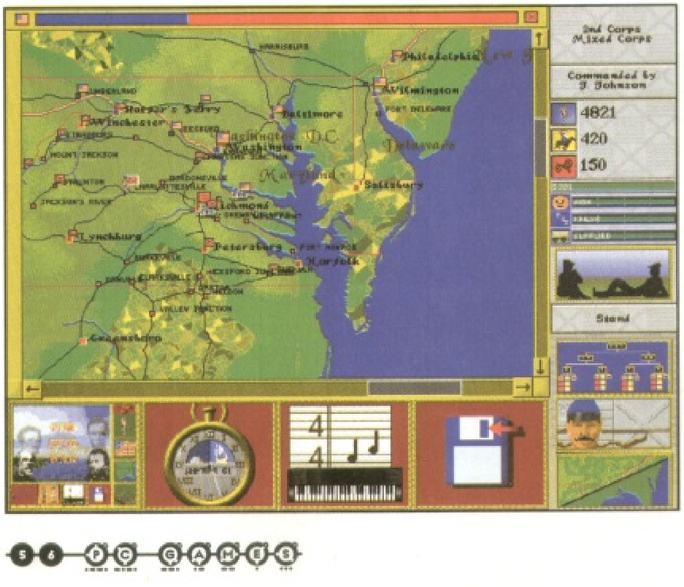
Considering the complexity of the troop movements and the large scale of the conflict, I have to admit to being a bit wary on loading up the game. My first battle was a simple little affair with a small army on each side, just to get into the swing of things, and within five minutes I was totally into it. Moving units around and getting them to do intelligent things in a co-ordinated, almost strategic, manner was a cinch. Relieved? You bet.

Everything is icon driven to make it easy to suss out, and there aren't that many icons you need either. You can see what's going on from the excellent isometric map display, which you can zoom and pan around for the best view of the action at hand. You don't control each and every troop, but you can give orders to small units as well as whole armies, and you're able to watch individual troops battling it out — right down to smoke coming out of the ends of cannons.


VAZZO
Grant
MISSISSIPPI
Sherman
Sherman
BRIDGEPORT
VICKSBURG
CLINTON
JACKSON
McPherson & McClernand
CHAMPION'S HILL
Pemberton
BIG BLACK RIVER
WARRENTON
McClernand
NEW CARTHAGE
Sherman & McClernand
RAYMOND
Sherman & McPherson
AUBURN
McClernand
McPherson
McPherson
ROCKY SPRINGS
HARD TIMES
GRAND GULF
MISSISSIPPI
GRINDSTONE FERRY
BRUINSBURG
PORT GIBSON

(Above) The database has some excellent bachground on the war, showing us exactly who did what to whom and how they managed it.

(Below) In the campaign game you'll find yourself faced with a big map like this and hundreds of thousands of men awaiting your commands. As with the battle map you can zoom in to see better the gory details of who's where and what they're up to.

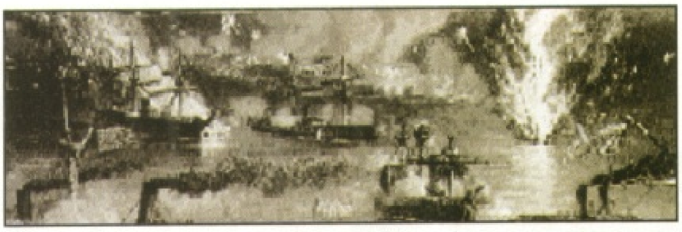

HARRISBURG
Philadelphia
Wilmington
FORT DELAWARE
Harper's Ferry
Winchester
Baltimore
Washington D.C.
Washington
MOUNT JACKSON
Delaware
Maryland
Salisbury
JACKSON'S RIVER
Richmond
Lynchburg
Petersburg
FORT MONROE
Norfolk
VALLEY JUNCTION
Greensboro
2nd Corps
Mixed Corps
Commanded by
J. Johnson
4821
420
150
Stand

Unlike most strategy games, I'd finished my first battle in an hour and was ready for more, having thrashed the pants off the Yankies. I went on to cover each of the four (yes, only four) battles in the game, playing each side each time and working my way through the difficulty levels until only a few hours later I had finished them all. Bummer. End of game.

This experience goes to show both the good and the bad about Civil War. On the one hand it looks and plays with the guts of a non-strategy game. In short, it isn't boring. On the other, it's far too easy even for non-veterans of this type of thing, even on higher difficulty levels, which is a shame. You'd have thought that that's the one lesson the design geezers would have learnt from Fields Of Glory, but sadly no.

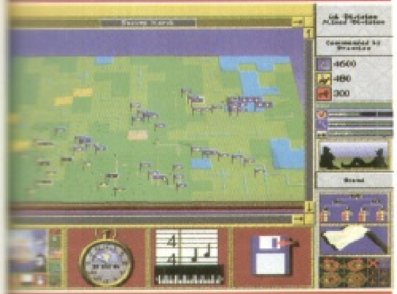
But wait, there's more. There's the campaign side of things, which didn't exist and was sorely missed in Fields Of Glory. You can (and this is where you get into the meat of the game for real) control all the armies, navies and towns on either side for the whole duration of the war. You start with a map of the whole southeast of North America and deal with everything from supplying your men to recruiting new units. Move them around and get into fearsome battles with huge numbers of troops — at which point the game shifts into battle mode and you play the battle as you would in one of the pre-prepared battles. When it's over you return to the big map and carry on until you've beaten the opposition into submission.

This is the true heart of Civil War, and isn't something you can finish overnight. I finished it over three nights, albeit very long ones, and still have the challenge of the highest difficulty levels ahead. That gives the whole package a longer appeal, but still not very good. The only way to really get your hours out of it is to hook it up to a

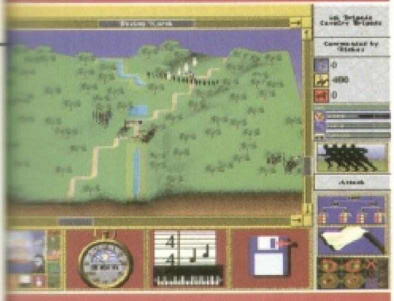


(Above & below) War is hell, as these images from the Civil War go to prove. For every little flag on your map, you have hundreds of men, tens of cannons or fleets of ships to command — and so does the enemy.

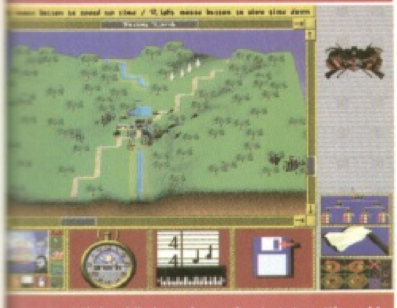
Charge!



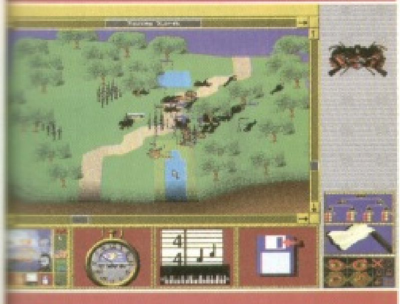
The traitorous enemy's units are caught napping to the southwest by oodles of my finest dark blue troopers. Confident that I can kick their sorry Southern bottoms (or 'butts', as the Yanks would say), I send a few divisions in for an easy kill.



The sixth brigade cavalry, feeling fresh and ready for battle, sneak down the road towards an unsuspecting unit of mixed infantry and artillery. I know it looks like there are only a dozen of my guys, but there are really 480. That's graphics for you.



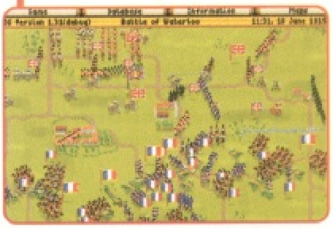
A little while later the smoke starts to settle and I can check out what exactly it was that happened while I was giving the rest of the army its marching orders. Judging by the bodies and broken cannons, *something* certainly went down.



...And here it all is in close up and from the rear, so that you can see the carnage for yourself... except that all the carnage seems to have been against my troops and not by them. Oops, perhaps the enemy were a little stronger than I counted on. Sorry guys.

It's a bit like...

...MicroProse's Fields Of Glory. But given that both games were written by the same development team, that should come as no surprise. FOG's main failing was that it was too easy to beat — a problem which Civil War shares, but not to the same extent. Strangely, despite being an older game, FOG actually looks better than Civil War. Bizarre.



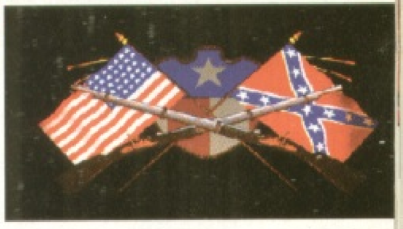
mate in two-player mode, which can be one hell of a struggle. The artificial intelligence isn't bad, but this is the sort of game that truly benefits from playing against a real flesh-and-grey-matter opponent.

I think that Civil War is a stunning achievement, because it's a strategy game that gets you into the landscape and the troop manoeuvres without resorting to the top-down hex-based graphics with little sprite counters moving over it. Those games first appeared when people began converting boardgames across to the computer and really shouldn't be necessary any more. It does that without losing ease of play or, indeed, depth of play. There's plenty of meat on them there gaming bones, that's for sure.

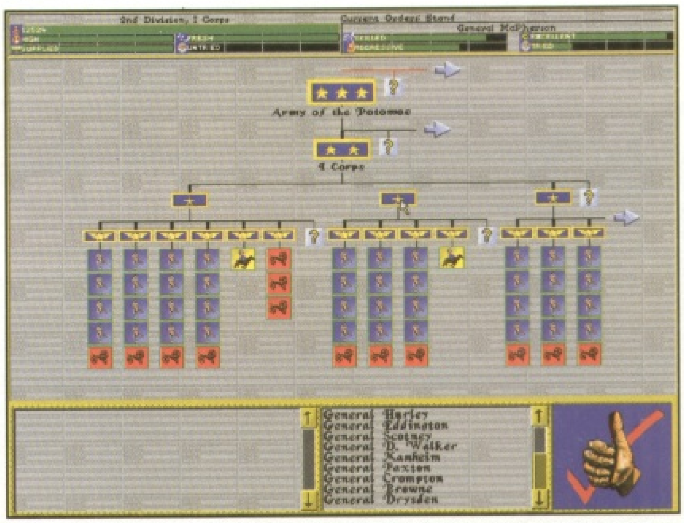
On the other hand it loses a few brownie points for being too easy in the long run and for a couple of little niggles. For one, the SVGA graphics are neat enough, but without shading to fluidly blend colours you do get a slightly ragged look to hills and valleys. For another, the tinny, Casio-keyboard tunes should have been removed before being released on an unsuspecting public. I switched off the music within seconds of starting the first game. It's *that* awful.

I thought I'd have a problem with the basic subject matter — after all, not many of us Brits have much of a clue what happenned in the American Civil War — but the interactive database included in the game covers the main people, weapons, battles and tactics, as well as having photos from the era and a few extra bits and bobs. The section offering to teach me the favourite songs of the war was the only one I certainly did *not* use.

Civil War would surely have got a better mark but for fact that even naive beginners will have finished it within a few tries. Everything else, from the presentation to the gameplay and all the rest, is a heartening mix of building on the successes of its predecessor and avoiding making the same mistakes twice.



(Above) Although Civil War isn't the best-looking game ever created — hey, we're talking strategy here — the presentation is more than adequate.



Each army has a structure, and if you choose you can give individual sections orders, rather than telling the general in charge and letting him run the whole shooting match for you. Of course, in a complex battle, that ends up being lots of work.

CIVIL WAR^{CD}

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MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, SVGA, 4Mb RAM, SVGA, 7Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster, Pro Audio Spectrum and Gravis UltraSound soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- A strategy game without hexes that still gives quality strategy for diehard fans and beginners alike.
- The two-player options are excellent all round.
- A stonkingly good campaign option makes this one of the best games in its field.

...AND THE BAD

- It's way too easy, just like Fields of Glory before it.
- Only four stand-alone battles and one campaign? Shame on you, Empire.
- Somebody turn that bloody music off.

Overall

84%

Prisoner Of

Alex Simmons has nightmares as Infogrames' obsession with horror and H.P. Lovecraft continues.

If spiders, slugs and other creep-crawlies give you the heebie-jeebies, be warned. Prisoner Of Ice has an atmosphere of brooding menace that can be genuinely frightening if you play it alone, at night, with the lights out. I, of course, am made of sterner stuff. Taking advantage of the extra hours of daylight during the summer months, I can honestly say I wasn't scared. Much.

Prisoner of Ice (POI) is the latest graphic adventure in Infogrames' series based on Chaosium's Call Of Cthulhu RPG. Like its predecessor, Shadow Of The Comet (SOTC), the macabre plot owes its inspiration to H.P. Lovecraft's short Gothic novel, 'At The Mountains of Madness'. Unlike Shadow Of The Comet, however, POI has an admirably simple player interface, superb graphics and sound (apart from the digitised speech — but I'll come on to that later), and slick presentation.

In fact, apart from the superficial similarities of plot, atmosphere and timescale, the two games aren't very much alike. John Parker, the star of the first game, has a cameo role halfway through this one — but he's about thirty years older and not much cop when it comes to reptile management. The Old Ones, too, strut their slithery stuff again and steal the show with hordes of slimeballs eager to foil your plans. But almost everything else is different.

When the action begins in January, 1937, the explorer Peter Hamsun, his son Bjorn and a Royal Navy Commando have just escaped from a Nazi military base near the South Pole, carrying three mysterious cargo crates with them. After a pretty nasty incident involving some splintered wood, several slime-soaked tentacles and two people being dragged under the ice, Bjorn is rescued by a Royal Navy sub with two crates still intact.

This is where you come in. Playing an American naval intelligence officer called Ryan, you're aboard the sub when Hamsun Junior arrives. Over the next few days you travel the globe in a tale which encompasses espionage, magic, Nazis and more monsters than you can shake a stick at. It's not a journey for the faint-hearted.

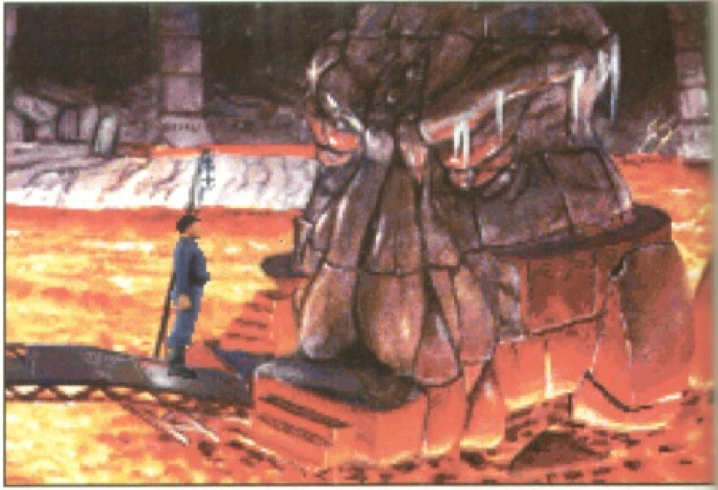
It is, however, a journey for anyone who's been looking for an adventure game which justifies the much-abused tag of 'interactive movie'. POI looks like a movie, sounds like a movie and is presented like one. Apart from the obvious Cinemascope-style viewing window, the action is interspersed with close-ups, cut-scenes and flashbacks which fill in the details of the story as you progress. There's a dramatic beginning and an equally strong ending too, and the characters have an Indiana Jones-like cartoon quality, with well-defined good and bad guys.

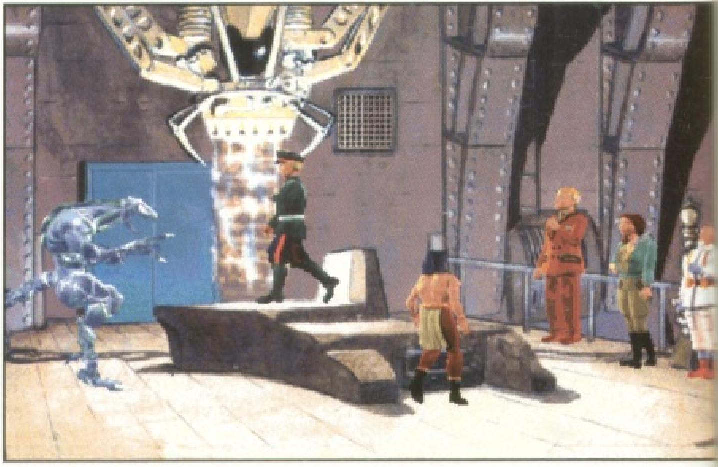
Much of the cinematic feel is down to the graphics and sound. For example, the narrative incorporates multiple 'camera' angles, so you see characters from a first-person perspective in cut-scenes, or switch from a side-on view to an overhead view when you pass from one room to the next.

Most impressive of all is POI's 'motion capture' technique, a 3D generator based on the real movements of actors. The programmers have used it

(Below) VGA mode doesn't suffer *that* much by comparison to the SVGA graphics shown elsewhere in this review, but some of the control icons and text look a tad blocky.

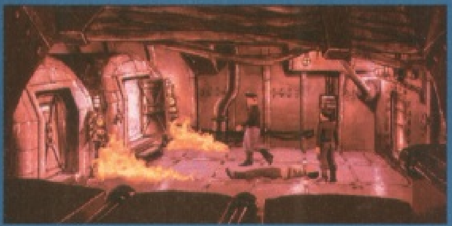
(Bottom) There are over forty individual characters 'starring' in Prisoner Of Ice, but not all of them as crazed as Obersturmfuhrer Dietrich or as sensible as Ryan. In particular watch out for the ones that leave a slimy trail.



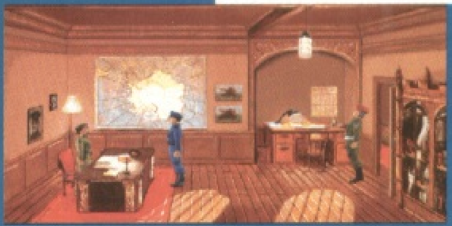


The Time, The Place

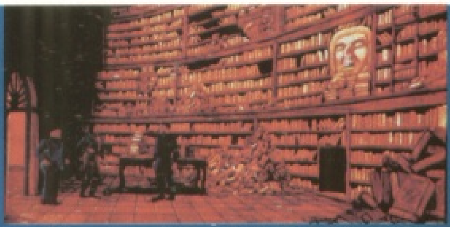
Ryan, our hero, faces a dozen changes of location before the showdown with his enemies at Illsmouth. Some places are safer than others; but then again, antediluvian fiends have a way of turning up just when you least expect them...



The action starts in January 1937, aboard the submarine HMS Victoria. The sub has just picked up two mysterious crates and a young Norwegian explorer. The action 'heats up' (geddit?) when one of the 'prisoners' defrosts...

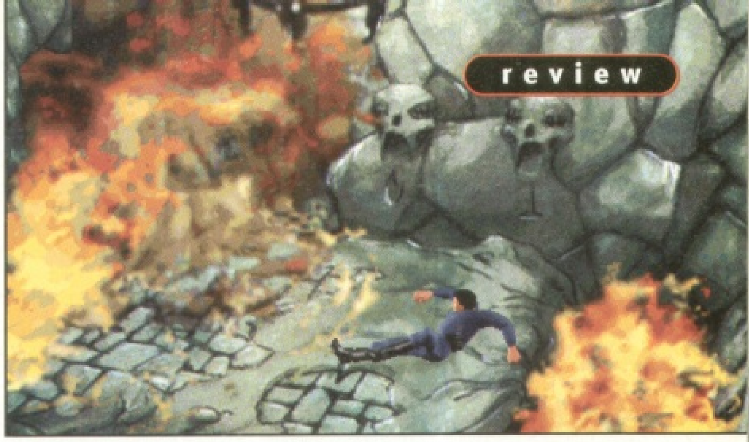


13 January, 1937. At Edwards Base on the Falklands, Ryan spends a quiet day pilfering equipment, feigning a stomach virus, starting a fire, stealing a look at secret files, and — well, you'll have to discover the rest for yourself.



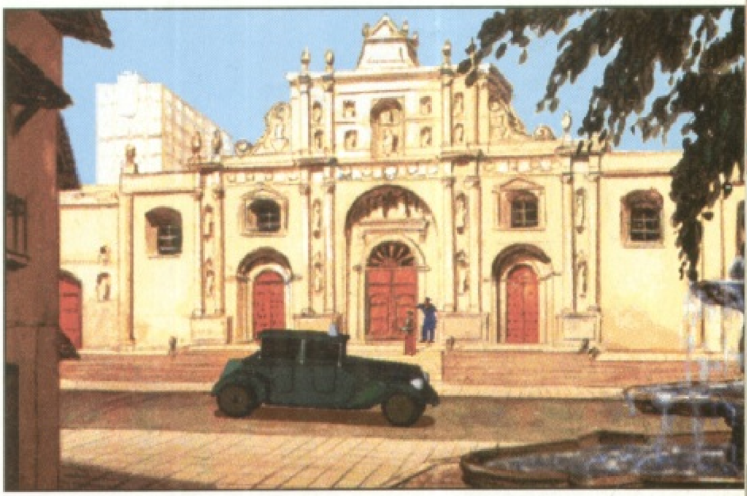
16 January, 1937. After literally helping himself in the museum library in Buenos Aires, Ryan has found a new friend. Meanwhile, some lengthy testimony from several expert witnesses has begun to make sense of the plot.

Ice CD



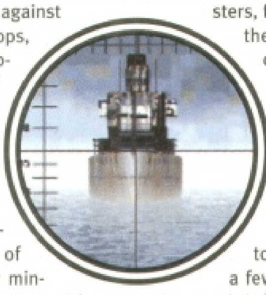
(Above) Prisoner Of Ice's motion capture technique allows the main characters to act and move in eight directions with incredible smoothness.

(Below) The quality of the painted backdrops is exceptional, although some might quibble that they don't quite gel with the ray-traced characters.



to calculate a reputed 50,000 sprites and create an unparallelled fluidity of animation. All the main characters act and move in eight directions with outstanding realism. You could argue that these smooth character movements look a little out of place against the cartoon-like backdrops, but that would be quibbling. Besides, on top of that you get something like 250 background animations too.

The aural effects are equally distinctive. The CD-based soundtrack is nothing short of superb, with over forty minutes of atmospheric music providing a menacing context for the action. If you haven't got a sound card, you're seriously missing out.



In fact, the only real disappointment is the digitised speech. It's well-acted and crystal clear, but the problem is that the direction is laughably bad — some characters scream or shout their lines for no readily apparent reason, which often ruins the excellent atmosphere and nerve-shattering tension generated by the game's plot.

In play, POI is a fairly typical graphic adventure involving a lot of wandering around, talking to people, fighting monsters, filching objects and using these objects on each other, on the background or on other characters. Some of the puzzles are too easy for serious gamers, but if you aren't an adventure nut then POI has plenty of dead simple problems to give you confidence and a few pretty nasty puzzles to snatch it back again. The only real let-down is the inflexible conversation system: all you do is listen, select a key word in reply and listen again. Challenging it isn't.

Mixed in with all this is the prospect of death around every corner. Ryan's globe-trotting takes him through about 150 locations, and there's always the threat of a slimeball, a firing squad or some gruesome magic trap lurking around. If you're the kind of person who forgets to save the game at regular intervals, don't worry: there's an auto-save facility which lets you start again a couple of steps back from where you died. You can, of course, save the game at any time yourself.

The presentation as a whole is very good. The interface is extremely easy to use: unlike the clumsy, mouse-free environment in SOTC, everything here is mouse controlled. The inventory is an 'invisible' bar at the top of the screen revealed when you want it, and there are keyboard short-cuts if you need them. Added to this are a host of in-game menu options which allow you to set the animation speed, determine the relative volumes of music, speech and sound effects, and select a text-only display, speech only, or both.

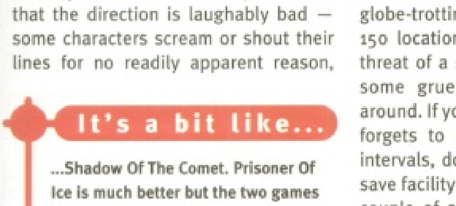
As well as the speech, there are a few other minor irks which slightly marred the game for me. For one, the hard disk installation is minimal, which means that if you've got a slow CD-ROM drive or a minimum spec machine, loading in new scenes can be a bit sluggish. For another, some of the translations from the original French sound a bit strange — nothing stupid or comical, just odd. Finally, instead of the default flick-screen mode, there's a scrolling graphics option. Even on a DX2 this results in slow, jerky movement which really isn't worth bothering with.

Overall, though, POI looks great, sounds even better and will provide a more than competent challenge for most people. It won't seriously tax hardened adventurers, but the story is so gripping and the atmosphere so intense that I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to anyone.

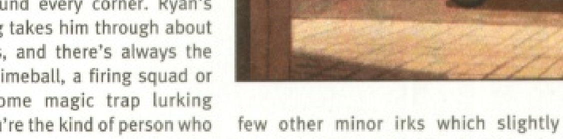
It's a bit like...

...Shadow Of The Comet. Prisoner Of Ice is much better but the two games share many features: a great atmosphere, action which takes place over a few days, plenty of opportunities to die and a strong smell of reptiles. SOTC is smaller in scope, has a less impressive interface and is relatively slow-moving, but it's still an interesting prelude to POI.

How can I help you?



17 January, 1937. The situation is getting sticky at the Nazis' secret Schlossadler Base near the South Pole. To make matters worse, there are dark mutterings of world domination and the imminent return of the 'Old Ones'.



This is it: the final day and the final showdown, as the hero Ryan goes head-to-head with Obersturmfuhrer Dietrich and the Sorcerer Narackamous at Illsmouth's stone circle. A couple of slick moves and victory is yours...

PRISONER OF ICE CD

INFOGRAMES/IN-HOUSE

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£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM (8Mb for SVGA), CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster soundcard.

THE GOOD...

- Superb character and background animations.
- Atmospheric soundtrack, with over forty minutes of music.
- Excellent presentation features.
- An engaging storyline beneath all the graphic frills.

...AND THE BAD

- Some might find it a little easy.
- The speech is a little dodgy.

Overall

89%

Silverload^CD

David Upchurch heads way out west — and gets viciously pecked, bludgeoned and beaten in Millennium's graphic adventure.

It's hard to get excited by a new adventure that doesn't look or sound particularly special, even when it's on CD-ROM. It's even harder to praise one that contains fairly simple puzzles and has a cumbersome interface. But despite suffering from all these drawbacks (and a couple more), Silverload still has something to offer.

For a start, the plot is unusual. It's set in the Wild West in 1879, and begins when two anthropologists visit the town of Silverload to catalogue and dispose of some artefacts. And guess what? The town has been under a curse for the last four decades, the artefacts turn out to be skeletons riddled with bullet holes, and the local populace consists of a band of blood-drinking boneheads led by a lunatic preacher. One of the anthropologists gets curious, has nightmares, hears voices, gets bitten and goes mad, thoughtfully hiding his journal before he starts foaming at the mouth. What happened to the other anthropologist is a mystery...

This is where you come in, ready to tickle Good's fancy and kick Evil's butt. You discover a couple of pioneer wagons on the outskirts of town and learn about your first mission. One of the settlers' sons has been stolen by the townsfolk and you've been asked to get him back. You head for Silverload with a gun, some cash and a map.

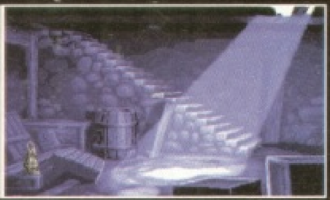
If the story so far doesn't interest you, stop here. There are plenty of other adventure games available with better graphics, clearer sound and more challenging puzzles. The interface is a bit outdated, too. Instead of (for example) the single-screen convenience offered by Sierra's King's Quest VII, you get a main display, an inventory, a map, and a screen where you can examine objects in greater detail.

Icons on the main display are automatically selected: roll the cursor around a location and it might change to an eye (examine), a hand (take), or a boot (walk). Objects also act as cursors, which means that if you're holding a cleaver and you click on a pig, the pig's head will roll.

It's all fairly predictable stuff until you get to the rootin'-tootin' action itself: Silverload has a quirky, highly-gruesome streak which is strangely appealing. For example, the list of objects you can carry includes a crowbar, a sledgehammer, a shovel, a hook, a hammer, a cleaver and a big stick.

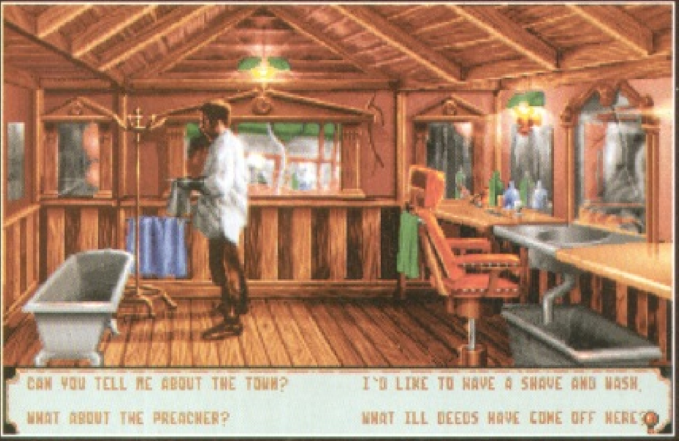
The range of characters is equally odd, encompassing a sinister priest, an annoyingly chirpy English barman, an undertaker with a passion for taking photographs, a barber who can barely prevent himself cutting your throat and a vicious gang of thugs. Add to this a dozen macabre ways to die and some pretty crazy cut-scenes, and you're almost beginning to enjoy yourself.

Unfortunately, the rest of the game can't match the off-the-wall appeal of the plot. The graphics are only average with very little animation where it's needed, particularly in conversations; the acting is pretty good but the sound



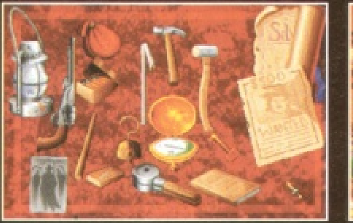
quality occasionally suffers from fuzziness; and the puzzles are not quite tough enough for anyone accustomed to the genre.

If you've never played a graphic adventure before there are better places to start than this. It's not a bad game by any means, but if the thought of discovering the grisly secrets of a Wild West town doesn't grab you, there's little else here that will.

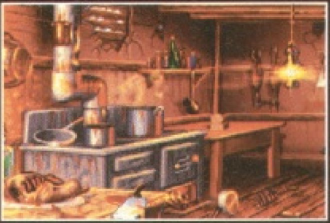


CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE TOWN?
I'D LIKE TO HAVE A SHAVE AND WASH.
WHAT ABOUT THE PREACHER?
WHAT ILL DEEDS HAVE COME OFF HERE?

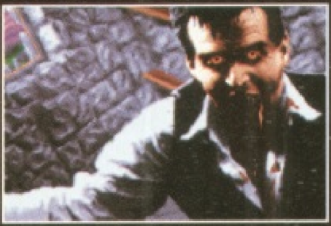
Conversations are unsophisticated. Select each of the four topics, listen to the replies and... that's it.



The interface isn't great, but it does let you cram objects into your inventory, find yourself on a map and examine items in detail.



A typical scene: gruesome graphics, a vital object and a puzzle. Rip up the floorboards to find out what lies below.



There are many ways to die, all of them accompanied by a graphic cut-scene like this. You did save the game, didn't you?

SILVERLOAD^CD

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MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

All major soundcards (need Sound Blaster for speech).

THE GOOD...

- Interestingly quirky storyline which features strong characters.
- The quality of acting is better than in most games of this type.

...AND THE BAD

- Too much talk, too little action.
- Interface is a bit clumsy.
- Not really tough enough for the experienced adventurers out there.

Overall

48%

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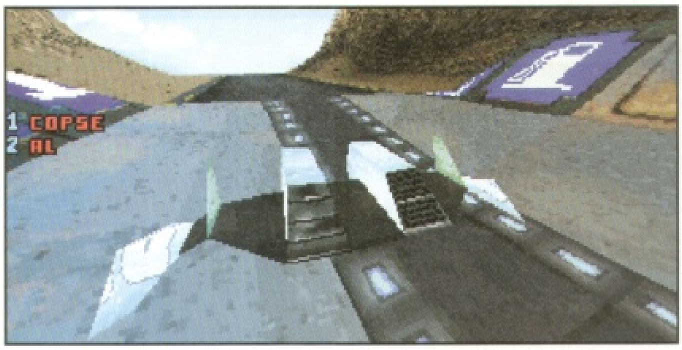
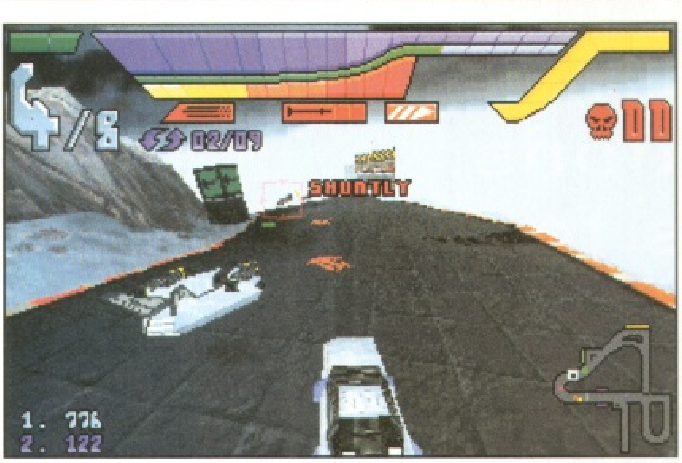
PC GAMES STAR

DANGER
HEAD

Hi-Octane CD





Let's start this review with an analogy; computer games are like dogs. It's true. On the one hand you have flea-bitten mongrels like Chaos Control, found rummaging through the trash cans of some dark alley, begging for attention. Then on the other hand there is the likes of Magic Carpet, a thorough-bred pedigree if ever there was one, attracting all the attention.

And with parentage like the aforementioned rug-'em-up as well as Syndicate and Populous, it comes as no surprise that Bullfrog's latest, Hi-Octane, looks set to steal the limelight off less-worthy contenders and could well end up as the Cruft's Supreme Champion 1995.

But while Hi-Octane is most definately a pedigree, what sort of dog is it? Well, it could one of two. Play the game as an outright racer and it's undeniably a greyhound: fast, sleek and well-groomed. However, choose to wipe the other cars out rather than race against them and Hi-Octane is arguably a Pit Bull Terrier: powerful, formidable and extremely vicious! Whatever comparison you choose to make, there's no denying one thing — Hi-Octane really is the mutt's nuts!

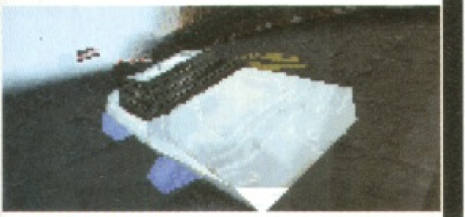
But enough of the canine comparisons, this is a racing game and a damn good one at that. Why? Because it just is, okay? It's got that *something* that grips you as soon as you start playing and never lets go until you've managed to fight your way to the front of the pack and win the championship.

It's simple yet addictive, fast yet playable. Hell, if you don't believe me check out the playable demo on the CoverCD of this very issue. However, when playing bear in mind that the superb demo is just a tiny section of the game, and the full version is *at least* twice as good. Let me explain.

Hi-Octane is Bullfrog's secret project, and until the E^3 computer show last May no-one had even heard of it. Now, just a couple of month's later, what could easily be described as the PC's most frantic racer has finally rolled out of the pits and is ready to fight it out with the countless other racing games already cruising the retail circuit.

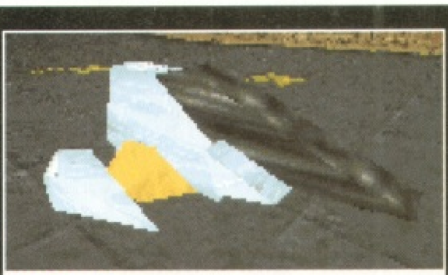
What's more, Hi-Octane will probably beat the lot of 'em to the finishing post too, Slipstream 5000 and NASCAR Racing included. The reason for this is because Bullfrog's baby is more than

Pick A Car, Any Car...



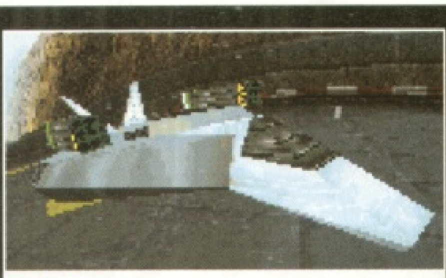
KD-1 Speeder

The Speeder is by far the best all-round car, comprising adequate firepower with thick armour and high top-speed.



Outrider

An excellent beginner's choice, the Outrider is extremely fast and packs a fairly hefty punch, but is poorly armoured as a result.



Beserker

The Beserker is the heaviest vehicle of all and is therefore slow, but makes up for this downfall with a huge array of weaponry.

It's a bit like...

...Slipstream 5000. Gremlin's futuristic racing game is about the closest thing you'll get to Hi-Octane on the PC, and while it isn't *quite* as furious as Bullfrog's latest masterpiece, it's nevertheless a damn fine racing game in its own right. It does have a couple of advantages over Hi-Octane too, namely it features more courses and is slightly more challenging in the one-player game. If you want a decent racing game, you really are spoilt for choice.

2:16:66
LAP 1
10

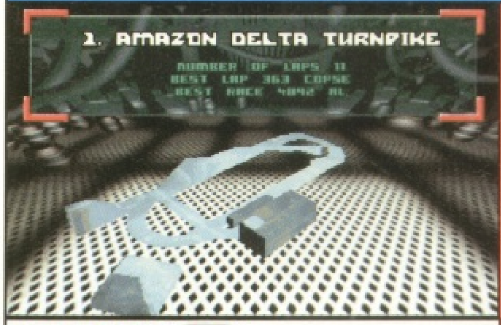
just a simple racing game, it's a fully-fledged shoot-'em-up to boot.

Set in a grim, Mad Max-style futurescape, cyberpunk joyriders have taken over the highways and byways of this post-apocalyptic world, illegally racing against other and causing mass destruction just for the hell of it. Sounds like a great laugh and it is, because when have you ever had the chance to nuke that annoying git in front who's always slamming on the anchors even at the slightest bend? Never — so now's your chance.

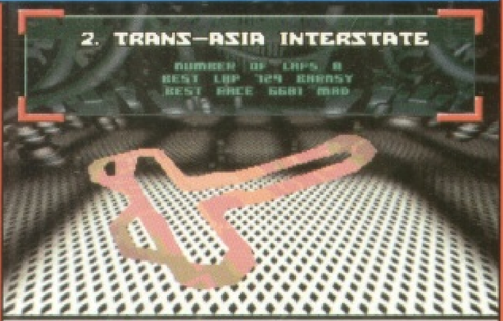
Based loosely on a hybrid of the Magic Carpet game engine, Hi-Octane boasts options for both one-off races and a full-blown championship, as well as including the now-familiar multi-player network facility. Selecting a one-off race is initially advisable, allowing you to familiarise yourself with both the tracks and the assortment of cars before entering the tournament itself.

There are six courses in all, each varying in both circuit layout, obstacles featured and terrain type. The first is a relatively simple oval course set in the middle of a sandy desert with rocky mountains lining the perimeter of the track. As the game progresses the courses obviously become more complex, and jumps, cross-overs and hair-

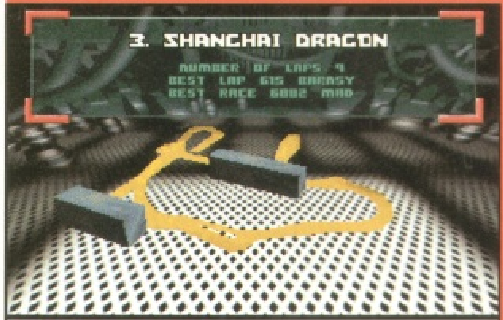
Makin' Tracks


1. AMAZON DELTA TURNPIKE
NUMBER OF LAPS 11
BEST LAP 363 CORSE
BEST RACE 4092 AL

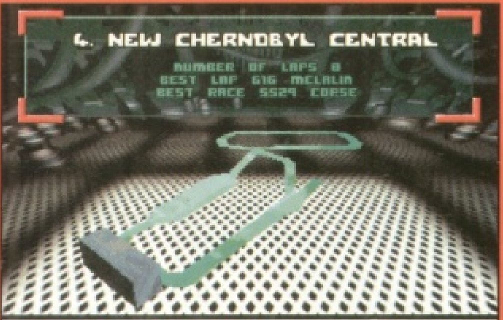
Amazon Delta Turnpike
The first and therefore the easiest course, the Amazon Turnpike is essentially a simple oval circuit. The long straights are perfect for kicking in the turbos, and use the short cut to get ahead of the field.


2. TRANS-ASIA INTERSTATE
NUMBER OF LAPS 8
BEST LAP 729 BARASY
BEST RACE 6681 MAD

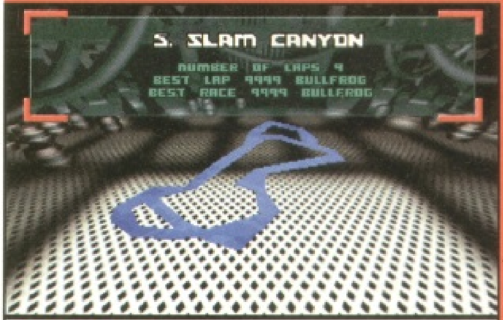
Trans-Asia Interstate
This wasteland circuit is plagued by an extremely tight hairpin bend. Take the corner slowly, using the turbos to quickly regain speed as you ease out onto the straight.


3. SHANGHAI DRAGON
NUMBER OF LAPS 9
BEST LAP 615 BARASY
BEST RACE 6882 MAD

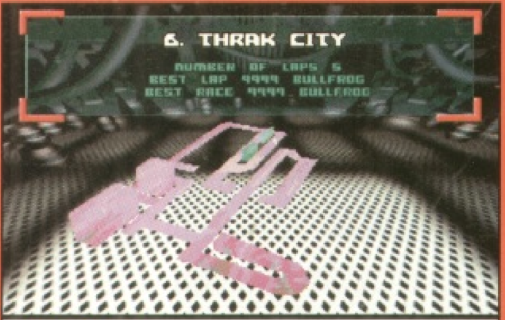
Shanghai Dragon
Try to remain on the tarmac course at all times, as straying onto the snowy plains to either side could send you reeling out of control. Also watch out for the jumps, avoiding fire from underneath as you fly past.


4. NEW CHERNOBYL CENTRAL
NUMBER OF LAPS 8
BEST LAP 616 MCLAUIN
BEST RACE 5529 CORSE

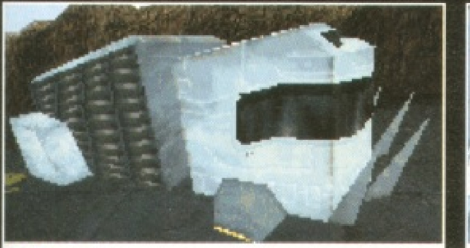
New Chernobyl Central
You'll find it difficult to get ahead of the pack in this figure-of-eight circuit, unless of course you charge the turbos to full and rocket down the canyon on the first straight. Watch out for the tight bends, though.


5. SLAM CANYON
NUMBER OF LAPS 4
BEST LAP 9999 BULLFROG
BEST RACE 9999 BULLFROG

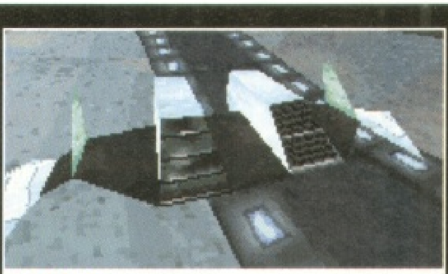
Slam Canyon
Things start to get tricky now, and some of the corners on this course could well cause you problems. Again, use the turbos to get ahead of the pack then drive safely for the remainder of the race.


6. THRAK CITY
NUMBER OF LAPS 5
BEST LAP 9999 BULLFROG
BEST RACE 9999 BULLFROG

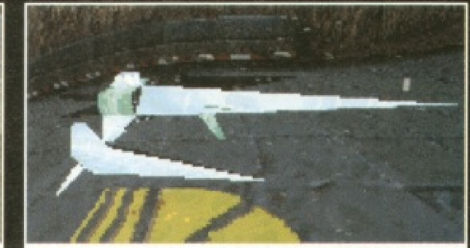
Thrak City
All of these tight corners look daunting at first, but once you've familiarised yourself with the layout of the track it becomes almost too easy. Use the moving walls by the hairpin bend to get ahead.



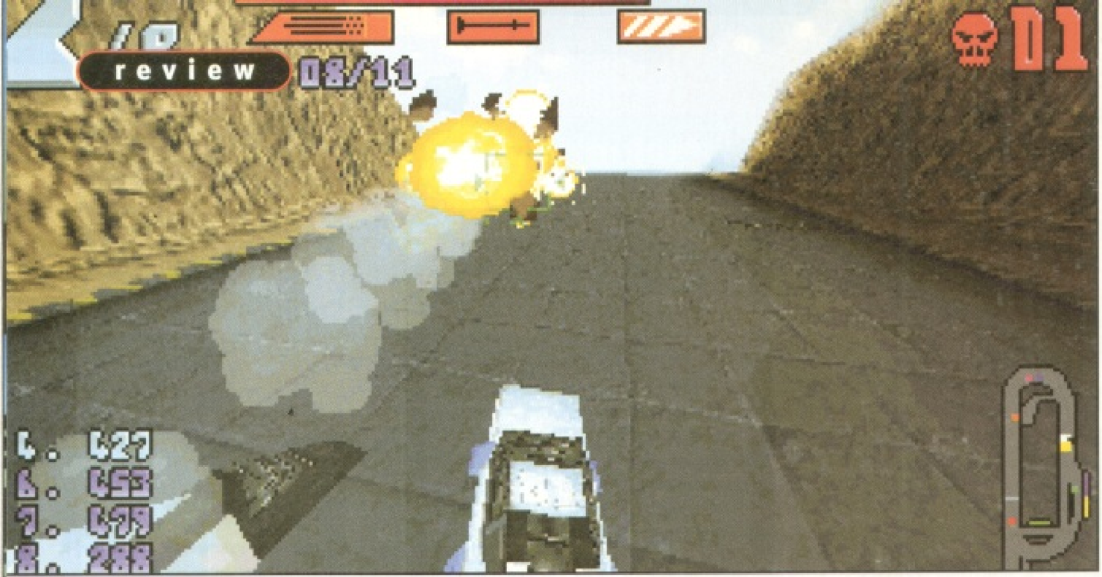
Sugga
The Sugga is a truck, so expect it to be slow but heavily armed and armoured (although not quite as resilient as the Beserker).



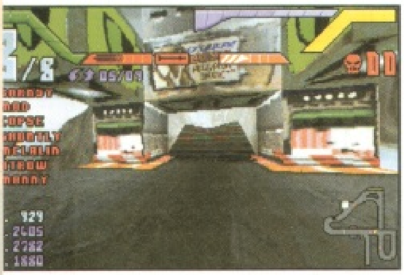
Flexiwing
By far the fastest vehicle of them all, the Flexiwing sacrifices thick steel armour and high-powered weaponry for all-out speed.

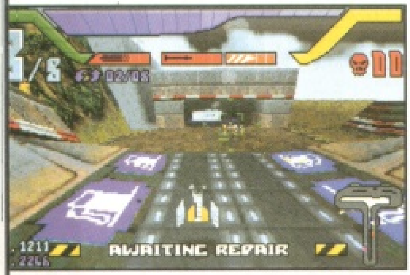


Vampyr
Don't be fooled by its sleek design — the Vampyr doesn't excel in any field and is therefore pretty naff, really!



(Above) Before firing off a missile, wait until you've acquired a positive lock then let rip!
(Below) Aha, another short cut! Hi-Octane is filled with secret routes, you've just got to look for them.
(Bottom) Occasionally the pit lane is incorporated into the course itself, allowing you to refuel without actually leaving the race.





pin bends are all introduced to test the skill of the drivers. There are also short-cuts to find and moving wall sections to negotiate, all the while being blasted from behind by some smart-arse git with a minigun mounted on the bonnet of his Volvo.

The cars on offer in Hi-Octane are very different from your everyday road vehicle like a Fiesta or a Metro, or indeed a Ferrari or Porsche for that matter. Futuristic in design, wheels are now a thing of the past because these beasts skim along the circuit, hugging every bump and corner thanks to powerful hov-units.

There are six cars to choose between in all, each rated on their top speed, armour thickness and firepower. The car you choose ultimately depends on your driving style, because if you're one for hanging back and blasting the crap out of the enemy, you don't really want a light scout craft with very little in the way of weaponry. Instead, opt for the massive Sugga truck, a massive beast armed to the teeth with missiles and machine guns.

If you simply want to get ahead and maintain your lead you'll need a car with an excellent top speed and solid armour all round, the Outrider pod-car being a prime example. The remaining skimmers are essentially good all-rounders, with little to differentiate between the four of them apart from their actual physical appearance.

Climbing in the driver's seat, the car can be controlled either using a joystick or the keyboard. Surprisingly the latter is by far the easiest to use, with the cursor keys used to steer the car, accelerate and brake. In proper Grand Prix fashion, each race begins when the starting light flicks from red to amber to green, then they're off and it's basically everyone for themselves!

No matter what difficulty level the computer opponents are set at they never, *ever* take prisoners and immediately open fire. Providing you've chosen your car wisely, the armour should withstand a fair bit of punishment, allowing you to open up the engine and speed off in front.

Driving the car is simple, and thankfully the gameplay is biased towards action rather than realism. Therefore you don't really need to use the brake — unless, of course, you want to turn on the spot and empty your chain guns at the oncoming competitors. Having familiarised yourself with the controls (which takes just a couple of races at the very most), each car handles intuitively so you don't have to worry about over-steering or skidding out at every corner. Instead just kick in the turbos, aim the gun sights and race for the finishing line!

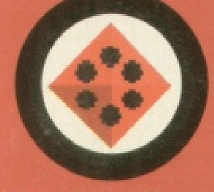
While learning the basics of Hi-Octane will take no more than a few minutes, actually mastering the various racing techniques takes a bit more time and effort. Even on the simplest courses slick driving skills won't win you races, so using your car's arsenal is vital.

No matter which car you're driving it will be armed with two weapons. The first is a rapid-firing minigun that is only effective at close range, while the guided missile is both highly destructive and extremely handy even at longer ranges. There is a downside to the missile though; to ensure a direct hit you must acquire a positive weapon lock, which means keeping the enemy in your sights for two or three seconds.

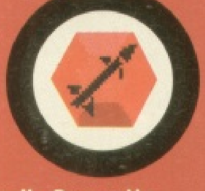
Unfortunately ammunition comes in strictly limited supplies, so keeping your finger firmly on the trigger won't win you races either. However, ammo top-ups can be found scattered across the track, along with a variety of other bonuses and power-ups. All supply bonuses appear in three sizes, either replacing a little, all or double the fuel, shield energy or ammunition supplies you're lacking. There're also weapon power-ups available, boosting your relatively pathetic pea-shooters into Death-Dealing Instruments Of Unthinkable Pain™.

Turbo booster upgrades can also be collected, and allow your car to momentarily double or even triple its top speed, depending on how long the booster was charged for. The turbo proves even more useful than the weaponry, allowing you to scream

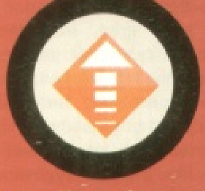
The Highway Code



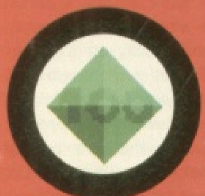
Minigun Power-Up
If the bog-standard chain gun just ain't powerful enough, grab this icon for instant relief!



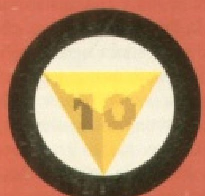
Missile Power-Up
Rockets hardly scratching the paint off the opposing cars? Nuke 'em with this baby!



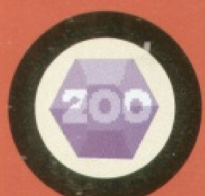
Booster Upgrade
Ride like the wind when you collect this speed-freak bonus.



Shield Top-Up
Slap on a Band-Aid and repair any damage with the ever-useful shield top-up.



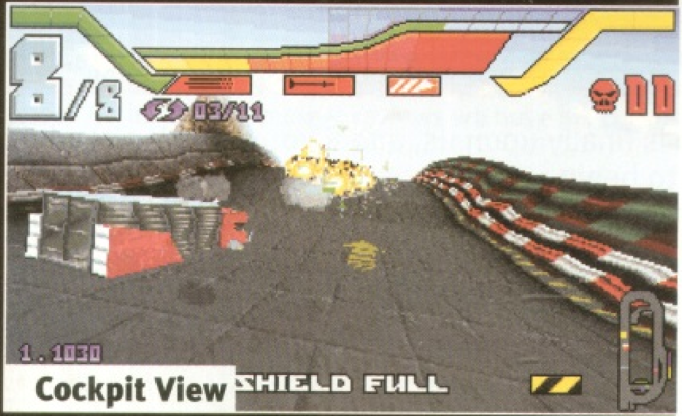
Ammunition Clip
Weapons are no good without ammunition, so keep an eye out for this bonus at all times.



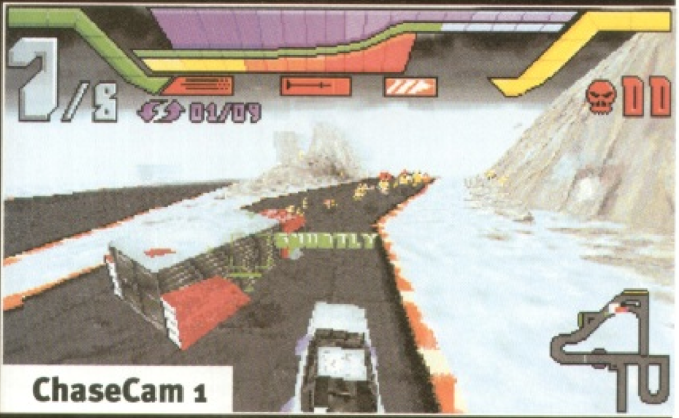
Fuel Supplies
Unfortunately your car doesn't run on thin air, so you'll have to grab these fuel bonuses every so often to stay in the race.

A Vroom With a View

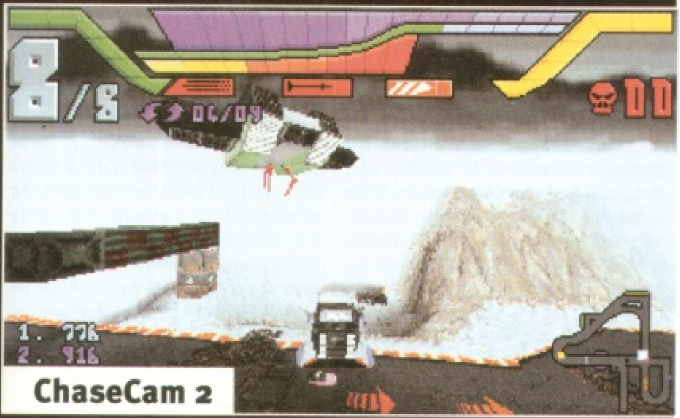
Hi-Octane features four Virtua Racing-style camera views. Feast your eyes on this lot...



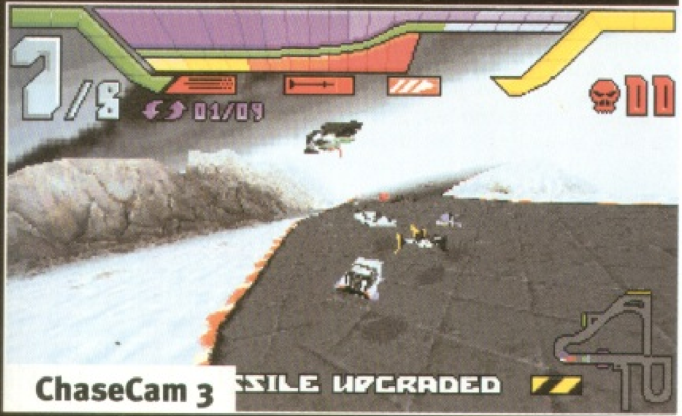
Cockpit View



ChaseCam 1



ChaseCam 2



ChaseCam 3

ahead of the opposition or enabling you to catch up with the pack should you skid out and crash.

In addition to the on-track bonuses, you can also restore ammo, fuel and shield power by skidding into the pit lane. Splitting off the from the track, the pit lanes top up supplies on-the-fly so there's no need to grind to a halt and wait for some half-wit mechanic to unscrew your petrol cap. Instead you just drive straight through, although the longer you spend in the pit lane, the more fuel you receive.

No matter how carefully you drive though, the likelihood of running out of gas while racing around the circuit is fairly high, so thankfully the tracks are patrolled by massive marshal ships that give you just enough fuel to reach the pits. They're also on hand should your car sustain too much damage and explode. Within seconds the marshal ship is on the scene, scraping up the pieces of your beloved racer and spot-welding them back together, before allowing you rejoin the bloody battle for first place.

Hi-Octane is one of the most visually spectacular racing games ever to hit the PC, its slick texture-mapped graphics moving smoothly and swiftly — albeit on a high-spec machine. Even Slipstream, which is an incredibly fast game, looks comparatively slow, and indeed doesn't look as realistic or impressive as Bullfrog's scorcher.

It's incredibly polished too, and no detail has been over-looked. Take the track design for example. Initially the circuits look fairly simple, but it's only after a few hours of play that you discover the short-cuts and hidden passages that allow you to gain precious seconds over your opponent.

Therefore you're pretty much free to drive where you want to, and aren't limited to simply skimming along the tarmac course. In fact, wandering from the path is advisable, even if it is only to avoiding the hail of bullets fired from the cars behind!

And then there's the sound. Although it's often overlooked, sound can often ruin a game unless it manages to create an atmosphere. Again this is an area where Bullfrog has concentrated heavily, with every spot sound effect and musical score complementing the frantic gameplay perfectly.

There's more too. Another feature that makes Hi-Octane more impressive than most other driving games is the fact that you can race from any of four Virtua Racing-style camera angles. While most gamers will prefer to drive in the comfort of their own cockpit, three external views can be activated at the press of a button, allowing you to sit slightly above and behind the car or even way up in the sky, looking down on the action!

Hi-Octane's not completely perfect though. As there are only a meagre six courses, it doesn't take long to familiarise yourself with each of them and therefore it won't take long to win the championship. Admitted the difficulty settings and multi-player game (which, incidentally, is excellent) help rectify the problem somewhat, but it's minor gripe nonetheless.

Like NASCAR racing, Hi-Octane also includes an SVGA option which looks breathtakingly spectacular but — and this is a fairly *big* but — it doesn't run too smoothly even on a 90MHz Pentium. To play Hi-Octane in its full hi-res glory you're going to need at least a P100, and how many of you can claim to have one of those beasts?

All the same, even in standard VGA mode Hi-Octane still looks awesome, but again at the price of high-end processing power. Even with all the texture-mapping switched off and the detail levels reduced to minimum, Hi-Octane chugs on a 33MHz 486, and to be quite honest the game only really shines on anything over a DX2/66.

If you're lucky enough to have one of these machine then great, otherwise I reckon you're best off looking for your thrills elsewhere — sorry, you may as well as turn the page. If you're still reading then congratulations, you've got a fast enough machine to run the finest racing game on the PC game to date — all you need now is the cash to buy the game...

HI-OCTANE$^{\text{CD}}$

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MINIMUM **SPEC**

50MHz 486, VGA, 8Mb RAM and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

SVGA; Joystick; all major soundcards.

THE ***GOOD...***

- You've never seen a racing quite so fast and frantic.
- The texture-mapped graphics are glorious!
- A good one-player game, an even better multi-player racer.
- This really is arcade racing at its very best.

...AND THE ***BAD***

- The SVGA mode is pretty much useless unless you've got a 100MHz Pentium.
- Six circuits isn't really that many.

Overall

91%

cd updates

Only one CD Update? It seems the CD revolution is finally upon us, and if you haven't already upgraded from floppy, now is definitely the time to begin.

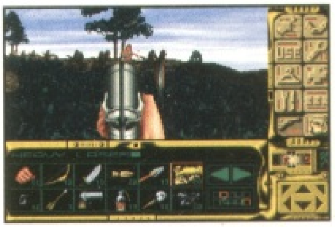
Robinson's Requiem^{CD}

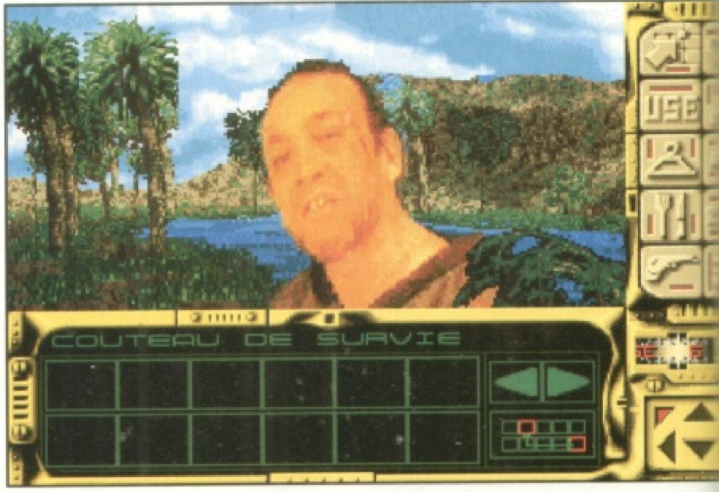
Considering the original Robinson's Requiem was released on floppy a year ago, little has been done to spruce up this supposedly enhanced CD-based version of the game. Apart from the odd FMV snippet, digitised speech and a lengthy intro sequence, what other real bonuses does this version have the original? Well, none really.

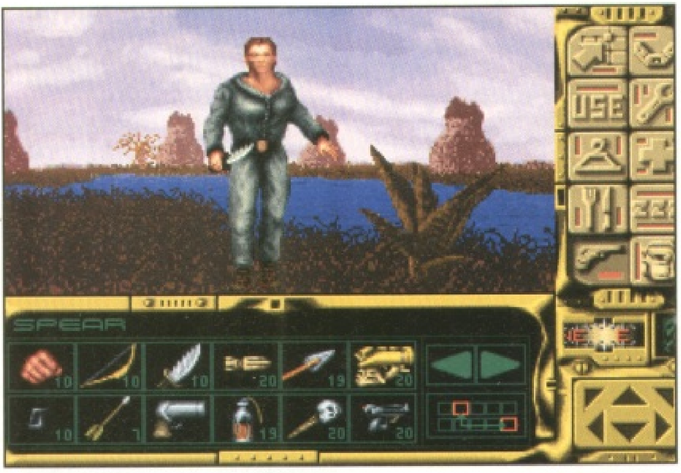
Just to recap, you're a space agent called Robinson who has been forced to crash land on a vast, Voxel Spaced planet plagued with werewolves, tigers and such like. Obviously survival is the aim of the game, with the player having to fight off the blood-thirsty beasts that patrol the land as well as chills brought on by the harsh weather.

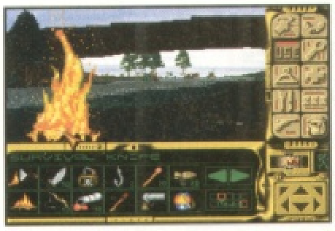
Wazzat? Chills? Yup, you heard right. You see, the game's most unique features is its realism — if you don't take good care of Robinson he'll kick the bucket. Forget to boil the water before drinking and you could get food poisoning, while sleeping in damp caves will inevitably give Robinson a sniffle. If these illnesses aren't treated, he'll die — it's as simple as that.

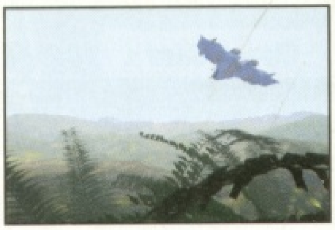
In fact, this 'unique feature' is also one of the game's biggest problems, because it's *too* easy to die. All too often you'll pop your socks and the first you'll know about it is when the 'Game Over' screen fades into view. Another let down are the in-game graphics; from a distance the terrain looks good, but up close the trees, grass and rocks blend into a pixellated mush of colours.

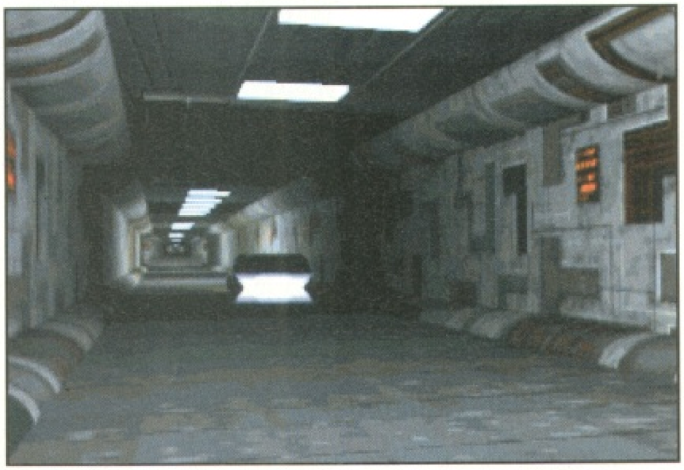












This makes exploring the surrounding area incredibly annoying, as it's bloody impossible to differentiate between the path and the impassable terrain. What's worse, Robinson can't climb hills or even slopes, so he's pretty much limited to trudging across the grass plains.

In terms of the control system the CD game is identical to the floppy game, in that the panel of icons lining the right of the screen allows Robinson to walk and talk, as well as heal his wounds and perform various other actions. Unlike the floppy game, when speaking to another character in the CD version you're treated to a digitised portrait of the person. Actually, I say treated in the loosest sense, as it's not much of a treat considering the characters are grainy and badly lip-synched.

As I mentioned earlier, there is also a lengthy intro which runs for some five minutes. While games like Wing Commander 3 had cutscenes that injected atmosphere into the plot, the opening scene in Robinson's Requiem is drawn-out and ultimately dull — much like the rest of the game, really. Gaming standards have progressed in leaps and bounds in the past 12 months, and as a result this shoddy CD 'enhancement' is barely worth the plastic it appears on.

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Overall 52%

Budget *Reviews*

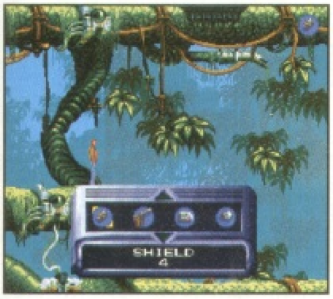
Each month we cover the very latest in PC gaming, but what about the old classics re-released at a bargain price? In this issue's budget reviews we have six cut-price cuties to sink your teeth into.

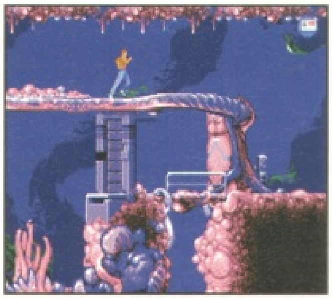
Flashback

Delphine originally caused something of a stir with this release and its predecessor, Another World. Both were highly praised for their fluid animation, challenging puzzles and great gameplay. But while the graphics aren't especially impressive now, especially when compared to games like BioForge and Alone In The Dark, the rest still holds true.

Flashback is a huge, sprawling, platform-based arcade adventure which takes place over six main levels. It's 2142 AD, and Conrad Hart has invented a machine which reveals that many top-ranking humans are, in fact, aliens in disguise. Naturally, these aliens try to kill him, but he escapes, crashes, loses his memory and wakes up in the jungle.

This fairly unoriginal intro masks a strong game. There's an interesting ensuing story which binds the action together, and the levels are packed with sophisticated problems to solve, conversations, animated cut-scenes and plenty of running, jumping and fighting to boot. There are over 200 screens in all, and you can play them at any one of three difficulty levels.

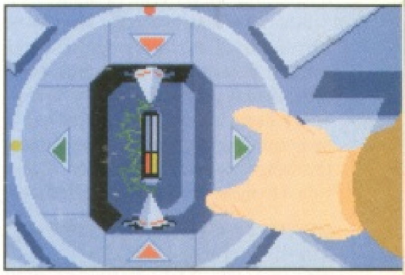




While the Rotoscoped animation of the main character can't compete with a game like Prisoner Of Ice, it's still good. The secret is the attention to detail: Conrad runs, walks, jumps, climbs, hangs, crouches, rolls forward, fires a gun and manipulates a variety of useful gadgets with great smoothness. Throw him against a wall and he bounces, falls, stumbles and dusts himself down.

Even without its decent cosmetic effects, Flashback would keep you interested. There are hordes of enemies and traps ready to destroy you, loads of sub-games, puzzles and objects to stump you, and lots of acrobatic leaping about to test your arcade skills. The keyboard is fine for most of this, but in all honesty I much preferred a two-button joystick.

If you haven't yet encountered arcade games Delphine-style, there's no better place to start than this.



KIXX XL/DELPHINE

(0121) 606 1800

£16.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

20MHz 386, VGA, 1Mb RAM, 9Mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

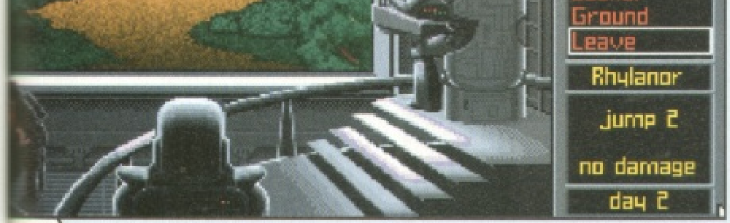
Joystick; Sound Blaster and Ad Lib soundcards.

Overall 81%

MegaTraveller II: The Quest For The Ancients^{CD}

The original MegaTraveller was a too-faithful conversion of the popular role-playing boardgame, a mistake which this sequel doesn't repeat. It's still annoyingly primitive, but the graphics, menu system and pre-game presentation at least make some use of the PC's capabilities.

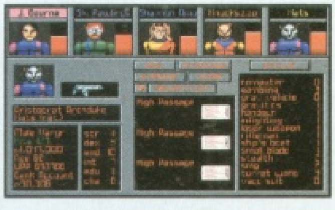
A cute but unsophisticated introductory animation sets the scene. Three hundred millennia ago the Ancients ruled the galaxy, destroyed themselves in a cataclysmic war and left behind artifacts of wondrous brilliance. One of these artifacts has now gone haywire and is threatening to destroy an entire world. By examining ancient ruins in sectors throughout the galaxy, you can find clues to help thwart the catastrophe.

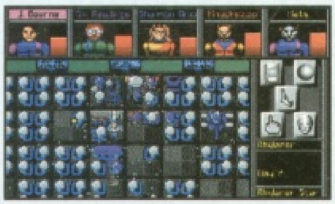


This is only the beginning of a huge game which features over 100 planets (many with more than one major city) and a wide range of character races and classes. You can get involved in exploration, combat, space travel, piracy and smuggling, chop and change your original party of five characters, and visit loads of different locations in each city across the system.

It sounds good, but it isn't. The main problem is the trade off between size and variety: there are loads of settlements to visit but one is very much like another, the tasks in each are insufficiently varied, and the graphics and sound are nothing special wherever you travel. The interface is crude, too. Most actions are executed using a functional system of menus which drastically slows the pace of the game and as a result weakens the atmosphere.

MegaTraveller II isn't really *that* bad game if you're prepared to put up with its all-too stark presentation. The role-playing system is strong and very detailed, and there's a huge task to tackle. If that's about all you're interested in, forget the graphics, forget the mark awarded, and buy it now. Personally, I expect a lot more from an role-playing game.





ACTION 16/CYBERDREAMS

(01276) 684959

£14.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

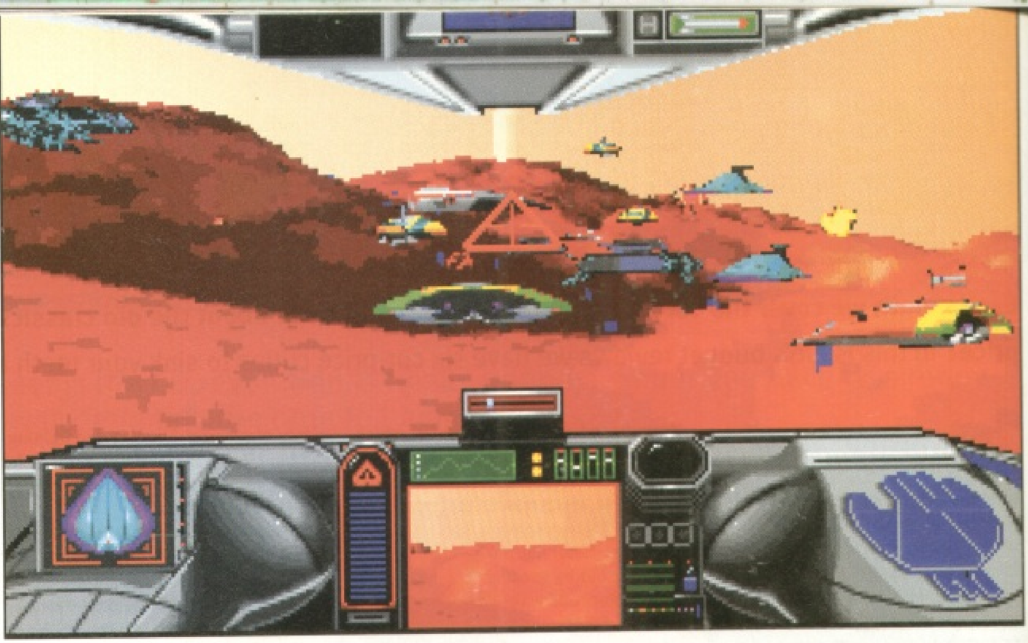
20MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick; all major soundcards.

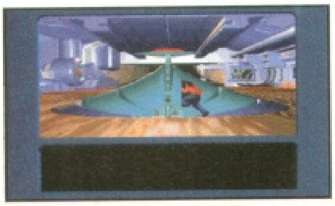
Overall 58%

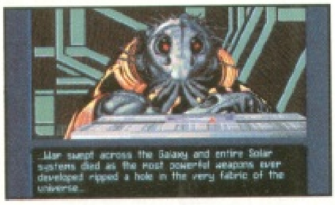
CyberRace^{CD}



I wasn't bowled over by CyberRace when it was first released eighteen months ago, so it's no surprise that I'm equally unenamoured now. It's a futuristic race-and-blast game with knobs on — but it has a boring plot, a stupidly-named hero and it relies a tad too much on its graphics to impress.

The story details a future war which has caused such devastation that the two sides have agreed to settle their differences on the cyber track. The hero's name is Clay Shaw, and because of a complex series of circumstances involving the death of his father, a torture chamber and his girlfriend, he needs to win the races at all cost.





...War swept across the Galaxy and entire Solar systems died as the most powerful weapons ever developed ripped a hole in the very fabric of the universe...

When it comes to the action things get much better. The graphics are impressive, with ray-traced vehicles and terrain generated by the Voxel Spacing technique. This sounds gimmicky, but it produces some stunningly realistic 3D sequences. The close-ups are quite blocky, it's true, but you barely notice them when you're zipping along at high speeds. Naturally, despite the minimum spec claims, you'll need a 486DX to truly appreciate all this.

The races take place over four different landscapes with two tracks each, and the winner is the first person to complete ten laps. You get credits according to the amount of ground you cover, and spend your winnings on hardware such as missiles, mines, lasers, armour, fuel boosters and special items. Every so often there's a free-for-all which basically involves zooming around and shooting just about anything that moves.

There's more to this game than racing, but not much. The absence of long-term interest isn't a terrible problem for a budget game, though — and if you're looking for something that's fast, fun and easy get into, CyberRace just about fits the bill.

ACTION 16/CYBERDREAMS

(01276) 684 959

£14.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM **SPEC**

20MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Joystick; Sound Blaster and Ad Lib soundcards.

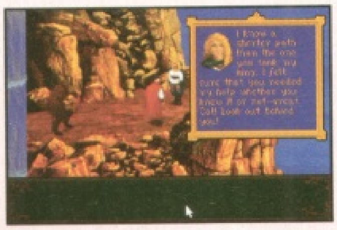
Overall 69%

Dragonsphere^{CD}

Following on from the reasonable success of Rex Nebular, Dragonsphere was the second of MicroProse's sporadic foray into graphic adventures. Its fantasy scenario asks you to find three stones of power which will prevent an evil sorcerer from rising and terrorizing the mystical kingdom of Callahach.

Callahach is a diverse land of people and places. Three of its regions harbour desert nomads, shapeshifters and fairies, all of whom are vaguely allied to your cause but won't really offer much help unless you satisfy their demands. The fourth region is the dark domain of the cruel mage Sanwe, and as such is your ultimate goal.

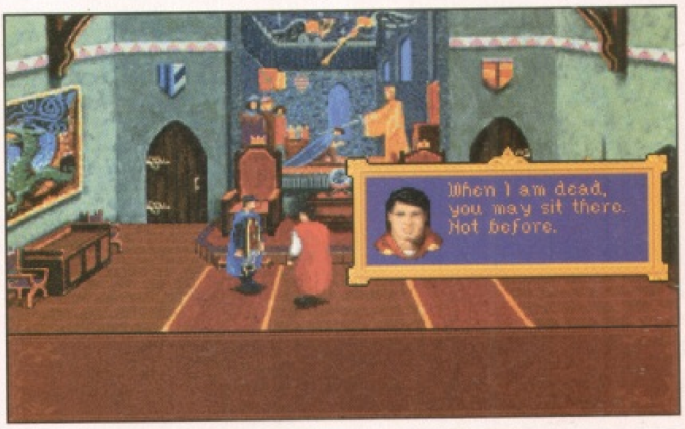
The action develops in a traditional way: from the start you talk to people and they give you information or objects, you complete puzzles and get rewards. However, there are some features which make this old-style adventure worth a look.



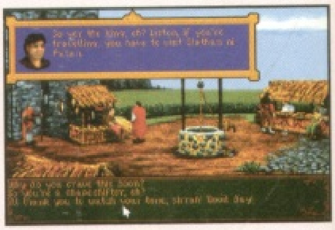
Chief among them is the interface, which combines ten basic verbs with object-related commands and screen 'hot spots'. The result is a satisfyingly complex system which is also very easy to use. There are plenty of other features which grab your attention, too. Two difficulty levels challenge novices and experienced players alike, there's constant variety in encounters, missions, puzzles, plot, graphics and sound, and there are a sizable number of both magic and ordinary items to fiddle around with.

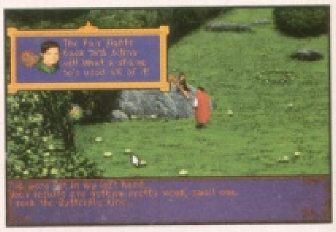
Problems include an uneasy sense of humour — the game never quite seems certain whether it should be serious or funny — and some poor digitised speech, music and sound effects. The action can be sluggish too, particularly when there are animated cut-scenes (which, somewhat ridiculously, you can't skip), or when your hero is moving slowly through a screen because of the detail in the animation.

Dragonsphere is nowhere near the best graphic adventure ever, but it's certainly polished and playable enough to warrant your attention. All in all, a pretty reasonable game for a very reasonable price.



When I am dead, you may sit there. Not before.





POWERPLUS/MICROPROSE

(01276) 684 959

£14.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM **SPEC**

20MHz 386, VGA, 2Mb RAM and CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

All major soundcards.

Overall 68%

Michael Jordan In Flight

Who is Michael Jordan? Only kidding. Anyone who hasn't heard about the richest sportsman on Earth and one-time minor league baseball player must have been living in a hole for the last decade. It's probably the same hole that this game emerged from.

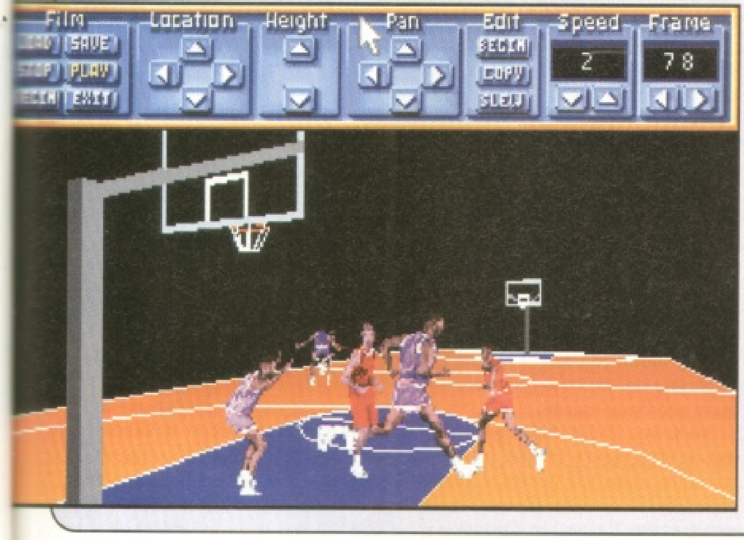
This is the second basketball sim to bear the slam-dunking superstar's name. The first one, Jordan vs Bird, is so old that you'd be unlucky to find it. This unofficial sequel was released only a couple of years ago to reasonably popular acclaim.

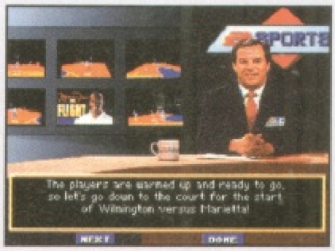
I can't quite see why. For a start, you don't get the full, frantic version of basketball, but a 3-on-3 substitute played in only half the court. The action seriously lacks atmosphere because there's no stadium and no crowd noise, and there's very little variety both in the range of options and the style of game. The absence of a two-player mode is particularly annoying.

The matches take place on a rotating 3D court populated by blocky sprites. There are two basic ways to play: either as Michael Jordan alone or as the player nearest to the ball. The first is ultimately more satisfying because it gives you a better tactical awareness, but the second provides more immediate fun.

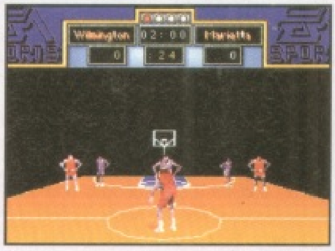
There are only a few positive aspects. The games are fast and the movements realistic — Jordan's moves were digitized from videos of the man himself. The TV-style presentation is entertaining too, and there's a camera facility which lets you analyse your game and repeat plays. Finally, Jordan makes some mildly interesting interruptions during play to offer advice.

However, none of this is quite gripping enough to make a great sports sim. If you're looking for a basketball game, this is a cheap option but not neccessarily the best.





The players are warmed up and ready to go, so let's go down to the court for the start of Wilmington versus Marietta!



EA Classics/ZCT

(01753) 549 442

£9.99 Out Now

MINIMUM **SPEC**

16MHz 386, VGA, 2Mb RAM and 3.5Mb of hard disk space.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Joystick; all major soundcards.

Overall 56%

Subwar 2050^{CD}

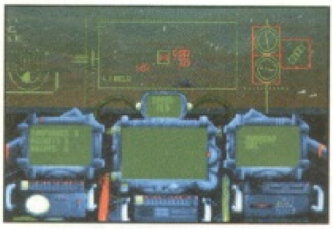
Before the release of Subwar 2050, the trouble with most submarine simulations was that they concentrated on the tactical and technical aspects of underwater combat at the expense of arcade action. This produced some pretty tedious strategy games that few people other than die-hard sim fans really enjoyed.

Subwar changed all that with colourful texture-mapped seascapes, undersea creatures roaming the deeps and a wide array of buildings and craft. It's set halfway through the next century, when advancements in marine technology have allowed the oceans to be farmed and mined successfully. Competing corporations have hired you to protect their riches.

Apart from the graphics and plot, this is a fairly traditional simulation. Before the action there's a mission briefing screen (including a natty 3D map), and sections devoted to pilot selection, sub configuration and combat training. None of these are anything to shout about, even for people who like to shout regularly.

There are four main theatres of war: the North Atlantic, the South China Sea, the Sea Of Japan and the Antarctic. MicroProse has done well to create genuine differences between each of these, both visually and in terms of plot. The action itself is engrossing, with beautifully responsive controls, a variety of views, constant surprises and plenty to do. The graphics and sound are impressive even by today's standards, with excellent use of light and shade and brilliantly understated effects.

Subwar isn't consistently stunning and you have to put in a lot of work before you get decent rewards, but it's a very welcome alternative to flight and tank sims.



PowerPlus/MicroProse

(01276) 684 959

£16.99 Out Now

MINIMUM **SPEC**

33MHz 486, VGA, 2Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Joystick; all major soundcards.

Overall 84%

Yours... for less than a Fiver

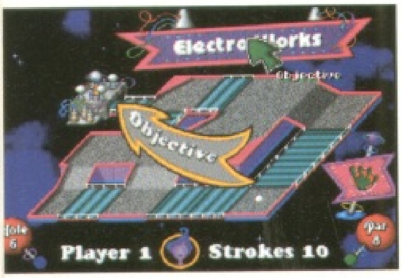
Come on in and make yourself comfortable as we sample yet more Shareware delights and low-price gems for the penniless PC gamer.

Fuzzy's World Of Miniature Space Golf

Pixel Painters

If any of you out there remember Electronic Arts' Zany Golf, you'll know exactly what to expect from Fuzzy's World Of Miniature Golf. It's a simple pitch-'n'-putt golf game, but rather than whacking the ball into windmills and along drainpipe tunnels, FWOMSG courses are littered with rockets, conveyor belts and even, erm, space-age worms.

Although not featuring all the holes of the full ú15 game, this Shareware slice has more than enough courses to keep casual clubbers happy for hours. Initially the holes are incredibly simple single-screen greens with a couple of slopes to spice things up a little. But by the time you reach the fifth hole things start to get trickier, the courses stretching across three or four screens while all manner of obstacles block the run up to the hole itself.



Unlike a lot of other Shareware releases Fuzzy's Golf is excellent in terms of presentation, the graphics being both bold and well defined. The sound is okay too, although don't expect to hear more than a bouncy tune accompanied by a couple of suitable plink-plunk sound effects as the ball is sunk in the hole.

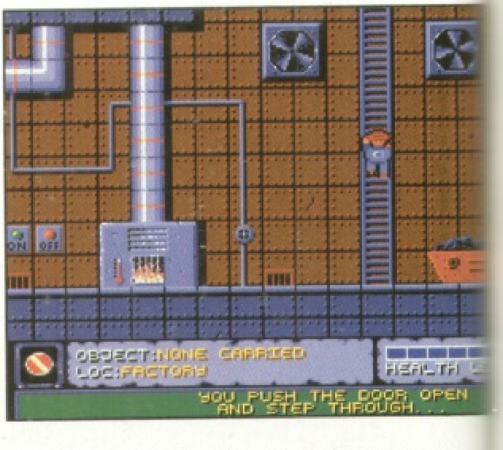
However, it's the game's simple but infuriatingly addictive gameplay that makes it such an outstanding Shareware title. In both one- and two-player modes it's great fun, and will keep you amused for hours as you try and beat that exceptional tricky six-hole course.

● **Contact: PD Selections (01474) 325802.**

OVERALL 86%

Framed

Machination



Waking up in a prison cell with no knowledge of your past life, your first objective as the hero of Framed is simply to escape — but how? In this platform game cum arcade adventure you can actually manipulate objects to some extent, so by grabbing the wire and sticking it in a nearby open plug socket you can short-circuit the ever-vigilant security camera. Then, having found the metal rod on the floor, you can pick the door lock and make good your escape.

Well, you could make good your escape if it wasn't for the countless sprawling levels and hordes of guards patrolling the complex. Framed is a big game, so don't expect to dig your way under the perimeter walls within a matter of minutes.

But as big as Framed is, I have to admit that it's not much fun to play. Graphically it's exceedingly basic, the background visuals being sparse while the character animation is laughable. The gameplay, although unoriginal, is generally okay, but it still fails to save this decidedly average platform romp from failure.

● **Contact: Machination (0121) 458 7306.**

OVERALL 67%

Teenagent

Metropolis Software

Teenagent is a rather good graphic adventure in similar style to early LucasArts' adventures, like The Secret Of Monkey Island and Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade. Assuming the role of adolescent super-spy Mark Hopper (a sort of '006.5'), the objective of this not-untasty Shareware snippet is to complete the various tasks set for you by the commanding officer of the base to which you've been assigned.

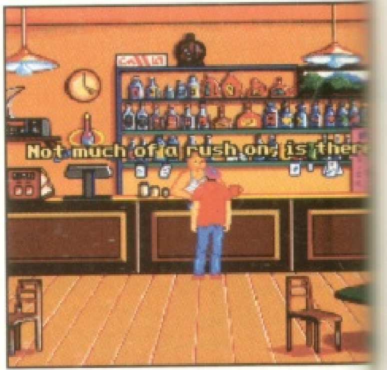
Graphically Teenagent is quite good, the character animation being respectable and the backdrops looking neat if a little home-made. Mind you, a great adventure is not made by brilliant presentation but essentially by to two things: the complexity (and logicality) of the puzzles, and the user-interface. The interface is easy to use, with no unsightly icons cluttering the screen. Instead one mouse button controls actions while the other allows Hopper to move around the game.

As for the all-important puzzles, this is one of the game's stumbling blocks. Initially they're simple, but as the game progresses they quickly become illogical and difficult. It doesn't take long before you're left trying all the objects together in the vain hope of solving a problem, but sometimes this doesn't always work.

Still, for a Shareware adventure it's not bad at all. Agreed, it's overshadowed by the fruits of LucasArts' loins — but then, for a couple of quid what do you expect?

● **Contact: PD Selections (01474) 325802.**

OVERALL 79%



If you're on the look-out for Shareware, here's a list of just some of the friendly and helpful Shareware libraries that you might like to try. Why not ask them to send you a catalogue of their games, or alternatively check this very magazine for adverts.

Transend Services BBS (01274) 622228
Transend Services Ltd (01274) 620536
Testware UK Ltd (01423) 886415
PD Soft (01702) 466933

Note that Shareware libraries often charge different prices for the same games, so always remember to shop around to find the best deal.

Also, remember that you'll usually pay by the disk, not by the individual game. This means that if one disk costs, say, £2 then a game like Raptor (which comes on a total of three disks) will set you back £6. Postage & Packing is normally included and, if it isn't, go somewhere where it is.

Rather than scouring the libraries for shareware, if you've got a modem why not try giving the following BBS systems a call. Initial on-line time is free but for more access most systems will charge you a small annual subscription fee.

After Hours BBS (01785) 228214
On-Line BBS (01839) 661199/88/77

As ever, the games featured here and a whole lot more are available on Compuserve and on the increasingly popular Internet.

If you have a PC and suitable communications software, then you can log onto CompuServe immediately. CompuServe's London dial-up node accepts all modem speeds up to 14,400bps and can be reached by dialing (0171) 490 8881. Simply dial this number and then type in the following responses to the system requests (shown on the left):

HOST NAME:	CIS
USER ID:	177000,5606
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SERIAL NUMBER:	93006

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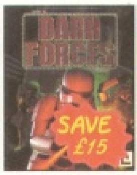

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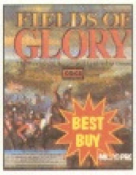

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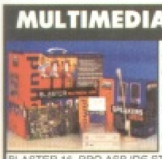

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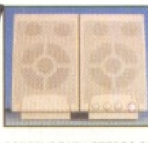

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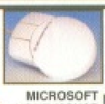

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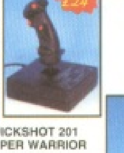

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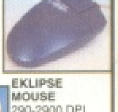

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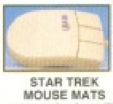

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POWER UP

This month's Power-Up is crammed with in-depth guides to Ultimate Soccer Manager, Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo and High Seas Trader. But to kick it all off, we tear apart...

Full Throttle

Take to the open road with Ben and the Polecats in this complete solution to LucasArts' superb graphic adventure...

Man, what a night... Where am I? And what's that smell? As the game begins you find yourself inside the none-too-glamorous setting of a garbage tank. Punch the right side of the lid to send it flying, leaving you with a large hole through which to escape. Try searching around your immediate location — this is a good opportunity to get accustomed to the new control system. Eventually you'll figure out that there's nothing much to really do here, so leave the screen to the right.

Try using your bike — huh, no keys? Enter the bar by using your foot on the door. Try exploring the objects found in the bar and when you've had enough try talking to the bartender. Finally, when you've had enough of his smart quips use your hand on him. After another brief exchange of words you'll get your keys. Leave the bar and use the keys on the bike again.

Just up the road you'll encounter another biker. This guy's from a different gang and isn't a big fan of the Polecats. Use either your fist or boot and let the punk have it. It's really easy to beat him — just move your mouse to the right and click a lot. However, if you're experiencing troubles take a quick look at the instructions in the reference guide.

After you win the fight, you'll pull a wheelie and watch as your front wheel rolls off into the distance. Following the ensuing crash you'll eventually wake up only to see a figure wearing a gas mask peering down on you.

One Gal Named Mo

As you come around you'll be introduced to Maureen — or Mo, as you'll come to know and love her. After talking to her, get the gas can and hose from the back of the hut. While you're about it look at the picture on the wall before leaving the shack.

Outside, talk to Miranda, the ace reporter; try telling her about the ambush. After you leave the shack, she'll take off in the car she claimed she didn't have. Walk off to the left and then retrace your steps to hear Ben mutter a classic one liner. Now walk back off to the right.

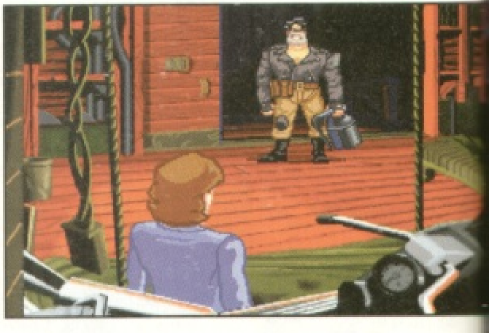
Torch-tastic!

First up, go to the trailer. Use your hand on the door to get Todd to come up from his subterranean hideout. While he's talking to you, use your foot on the door; this will send Todd reeling backwards where he'll sleep out the rest of the game. Enter the trailer and take the lockpick from the cabinet behind Todd, and while you're at it open the refrigerator and swipe the meat, too.

Step on the light coloured strip on the right of the screen and you'll be taken below to the workshop. Have a quick look around before grabbing the blow torch; you'll be instantly taken back to Mo's.

It's A Gas!

Leave Mo's and head for the gas tower on the far right of Melonweed. Use the lockpick on the lock. Grab the lock when you're done. Enter the door. Go over to the ladder and touch it. Aaaiieee! Quick, hide in the shadows to the extreme rear and far left of the tower.



Now wait for the cops to arrive. They'll look for you in the tower. While they're up there, open the gas cap of their vehicle. Use the hose on the gas cap and use the gas can on the hose. Lastly, use your mouth on the hose. After some more hijinks with the police, you'll go back to Mo's.

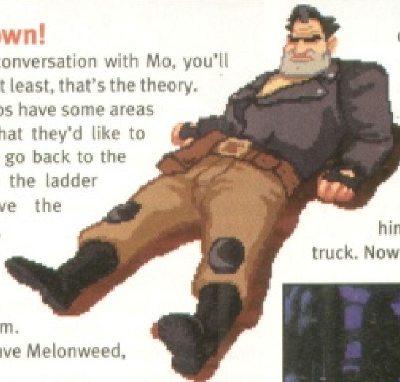
What A Bitch!

Now head for the junkyard. Lock the gate with the lock, then climb the chain. Go to the parts pile under the lights. Oops, did I forget to mention the dog?

After playing with the crazed mutt for a while, re-enter the junk yard. Move all the way to the right; eventually a red arrow will point you to a place where the dog likes to play with his cars. DON'T MOVE! Use the meat on the blue car next to you. Exit back to the left. See the big crane? Move the cursor over it until it become a red arrow. Then click, and you'll be taken to the control room.

Move the magnet over the dog's car. Hit the button to turn on the magnet and use the far left lever to lower the crane until it picks up the car. Raise the magnet as far as it can go. Now leave, enter the junk yard, and grab the forks from parts pile.

Get Outta Town!



After some more conversation with Mo, you'll leave Melonweed — at least, that's the theory. However, the local cops have some areas of disagreement to that they'd like to discuss with you. So, go back to the gas tower and touch the ladder again. Quickly leave the scene of the crime, get back on your bike, and get out of town whilst the cops check out the alarm. Now you can really leave Melonweed, apparently forever.

After a very long cut-scene with some interesting points (don't forget to make a mental note of Corley's nickname for his daughter while you're watching all this), you'll go back to Melonweed and Mo's shack. All you need to do here is look at the debris. After Ben makes some Sherlock Holmes-like observations, leave the shack and use your bike. Exit to the top-left of the screen: You've said goodbye to Melonweed forever (no, really!) and you're off to the Mink Ranch.

Alas, your police friends still want to talk with you, and they've closed off the roads. You'll find yourself once again in front of the Kickstand. Go behind the bar to your favourite garbage dumpster. Look in the dumpster. You'll find a new resident — Miranda, who looks right at home. She'll give you a fake ID. Now you can go enter the bar. Talk to the truck driver as long as you want, then show him the ID. He'll put you in the front of his truck. Now you can get by the roadblock.

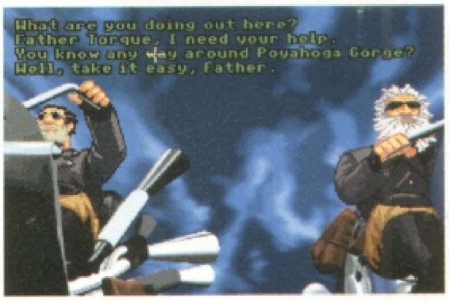
The Stink Of Mink

The trucker will drop you off at the Mink Ranch. After you swear a vow of death upon the guy who helped you out, enter the front door of the Mink Ranch (which is at the bottom-right of the screen). You'll find Mo's bedroom. Use your hand on her pillow — you'll find a very versatile tire iron. Get the tire iron and use it on the trunk. You'll find a hose you can use to fix your bike.

What follows next is another long cut-scene. After briefly seeing Mo (and eating her dust) and watching the trucker get his (but not from you), you'll find yourself next to a pile of fertiliser.

First, use the tire iron on the wheels. Then use your hand on the trailer. This should tip it over. While you're at it, grab some fertiliser — only a little. Then, head back up the road (towards the top of the screen). Ignore any signs leading to the Mine Road; you'll get there later.

You'll come across Nestor and Bolus. They'll follow you. Again, ignore the signs and lead the straight to



What are you doing out here?
Father Torque, I need your help.
You know any way around Poyahoga Gorge?
Well, take it easy, Father.

UNCLE PETE'S
MINK RANCH
BAG

the fertiliser. They'll crash (but live, more's the pity). After Adrian Ripburger takes them away, you'll find yourself next to the ruins of the bridge. Head back down the road and wait until you see a stop sign. Click your mouse then, and you'll stop at the crash site. Use the tire iron on the rear fender. You'll get a hover lift. Use it on your bike.

Battlin' Bikers

Now head for the Old Mine Road. Head up the road in any direction, and click when you see a sign for the Mine Road. The first person you'll meet is Father Torque. Talk to him for a while. Then you'll start meeting friends and having pleasant conversations with them. Here's what you'll need:

Chain	This you get from a guy on a small bike. Just punch him and he'll go down easy.
Chainsaw	Mohawk woman is impossible to beat with ordinary weapons. Just click the right mouse button until your fertiliser appears, then get close to her and use it. She'll go down easy.
Plank	The guy who has this is tough, but a whack from the chainsaw will convince him to part with it.
Booster Pack	You don't have a lot of time to get this guy before he boosts away, but a couple of hits with the chain and you'll have a new booster pack. Don't use the chain with the skull, just the plain chain.
Goggles	The Cavefish don't come here to play. The way to get them is to wait for the Cavefish to raise his head, then get as close as possible without bumping and use the board to give him a whack. One hit should put him down, but timing's crucial.

You can fight the others if you want, but they're just for fun. Oh yes, one final tip — if you come across someone you don't want to fight, hit the ESCape key to skip the fight.

Going Cavefishing

Once you have the goggles, wait until the goggle picture appears in the top right of your screen, then click your mouse. Look at the lower left part of the screen, and wait for the word 'CAVE' to appear. Click your mouse, and you'll enter the Cavefish's lair.

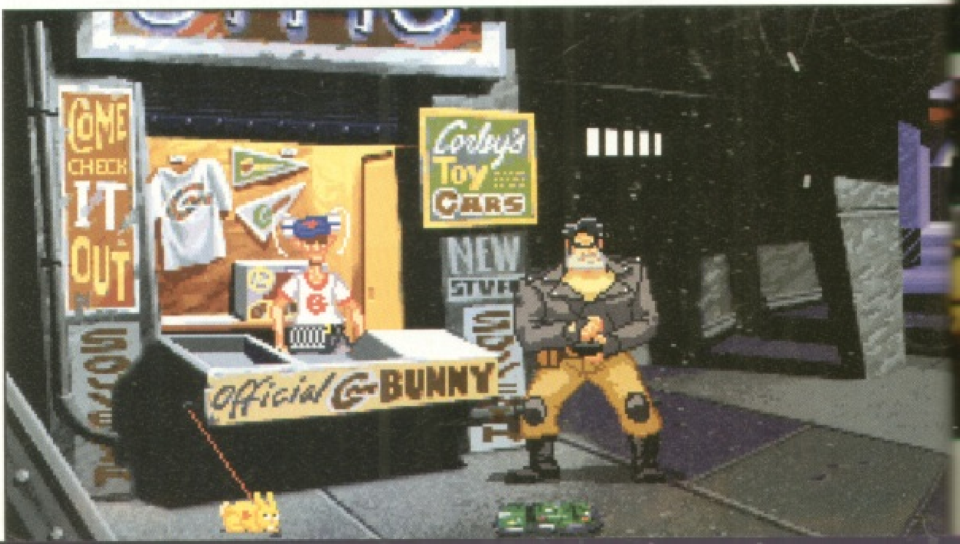
Keep driving down the road, through the turn, until you see the weird giant carvings — and a ramp. Use your hand on the ramp to push it behind your bike. Use your hand again on the ramp to hook it up to your bike. Use your bike, and drive down the road to the turn. Use your hand on the ramp again, and watch as the Ben creates a cunning trap to fool the Cavefish into wasting themselves. You can now leave the cave.

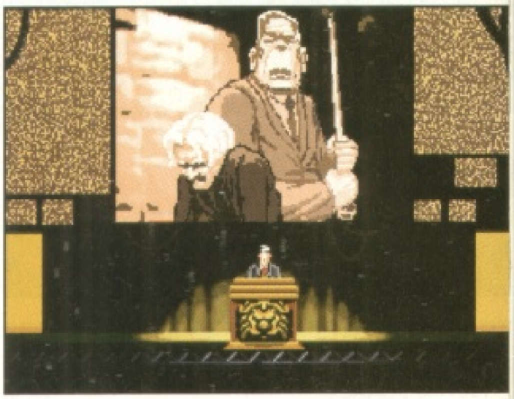
After setting up the ramp, read the sign next to your bike. Read the plaque in the lower right part of the sign. You'll now jump over the gorge, and be on your way to Corville.

Souvenir Stand-Off

Walk down the hill and enter the stadium. Go to the souvenir stand and use the joystick to move the toy car around until it runs down. Then look at the souvenirs at the rear of the stand. While the old guy's back is turned, grab the yellow bunny. Head back to your bike and use it to drive towards the top of the screen.

You'll see the Vulture's hideout, protected by a mine field. Use the bunny on the mine field. He'll hop along until he blows up, but he'll leave behind a small battery. Grab the battery and head back towards the souvenir stand.





Once there, use the battery on the toy car. Then use the joystick to move the car off the top of the screen. Then drive the car into the turnstile. The old man will go chasing after it. While he's gone, grab the box of bunnies. Go back to the mine field.

Use the box of bunnies on the mine field. All of them will fall out of the box and start hopping about. Quickly, pick all of them up but one. Let him hop until he blows up. Follow his path as far as you can, then drop another bunny. Follow this procedure until you reach the Vulture hide-out.

Bend & Stre-e-e-etch!

On reaching the hide-out you'll have a painful conversation with an off-screen Mo. Threaten her, call her names, and use the nickname her father had for her — Diapered Dynamo. She'll release you after a while, and the Vultures will come up with a plan that lead you to...

Demolish-'Em Derby!

After the cut-scene, the auto-battle will start. Mo's being guarded by Nestor and Bolus in the blue car, so you gotta find a way around them — or over them. Oh, by the way, the arrow keys are better to use than the mouse; they offer much better control.

Go to the left centre of the arena, and jump over the ramp. The bronze car will oblige by sitting right where you land; this stalls it. Push it across the arena and onto the ramp at the bottom right of the arena. Push it up the ramp and over the top. Follow it over; you'll bounce off it and onto the bad guys' car, stalling it. Now ram Mo.

She'll blow up. You run; run to the top of the screen next to the closed doors and set the stadium on fire. Next, you'll hop on top of the bronze car. Wait for the bad guys to ram the bronze car, then hop on top of their car. Wait for them to drive by the burning wrecks, them jump off and run into the fire. They'll follow and blow themselves up.

Lights! Camera! Action!

Back at the hideout, talk to Mo some more, then look at the disassembled bike. You're looking for a six-digit code number — and as we're nice, we'll tell you now that it's 154492. Now, leave the hideout and go behind the factory.

It's quite difficult to describe where you need to be when you kick the wall. It is to the left side of the screen, about a fourth of the way along the wall. See the three metal support poles attached to the wall? When you kick the wall, you want to be lined up with the far left pole. Wait until the green lines on the power meters all have black gaps (and the clicking noise stops), then kick the wall. If you've got it right, the hatch will open. Enter it.

In Corley's office, look at the floor safe in front of the desk. Use the six-digit combination, then press where the initials are engraved. The safe will rise and you'll get a card and a reel-to-reel audio tape. Now enter the hallway on the right.

Use the card on the card reader next to the door on the far right. Enter the room. There are two levers on the projector. Use your hand on the left motor lever once. Quickly, use your hand on the right lamp lever twice. Then leave the room. Mavis will leave her post and enter this room.

Once back in the hallway, enter through the centre door. Use the photos on the easel. Then sit back and watch another long cut-scene. You probably think the adventure's all over...

The Cliffhanger Climax!

...But it ain't! As the cut-scene ends, Ripburger has smashed your bike (although you already know from the number of times you wiped out on the Old Mine Road that your bike is indestructible) and you're clinging to the front of the semi for dear life.

First, open the grill. Then open the panel. When Ripburger leans out to close it, grab his cane. Use the cane on the fan. You'll climb through the engine compartment to the back of the cab. Use the tire iron on the far right fuel line.

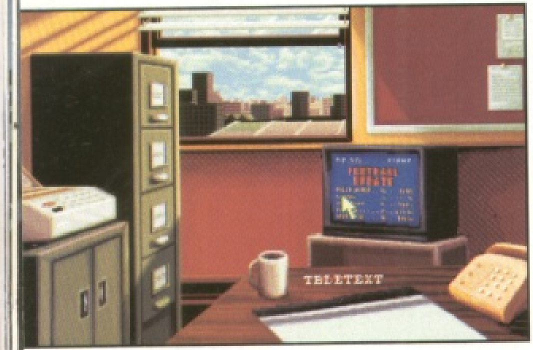
After some more fun, you'll find yourself in the Vulture's road-plane. Climb the ladder — don't worry, Ripburger is a lousy shot. Keep moving towards the ladder until you can climb it. Then activate the screen in the cockpit. If you're interested in trying to activate the self-destruct, remember Dr Strangelove. What you really want to do, though, is raise the landing gear. You'll find this option in the Takeoff — Post Takeoff — Gear menu.

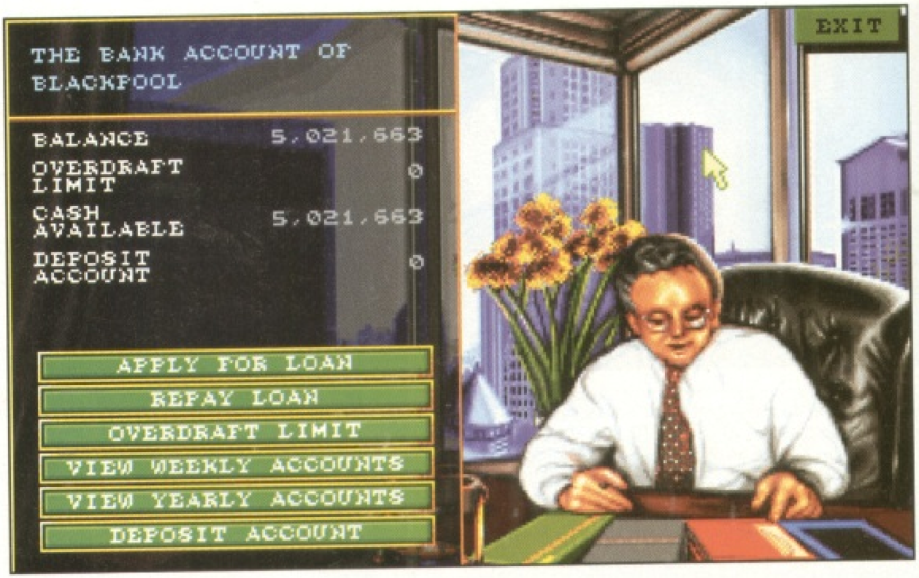
Next, you'll be on top of the cab of the semi as it teeters on the edge of the smashed bridge. Enter the cab, then activate the screen. Use the Defence menu to reach the Machine Gun menu, then use the Control menu to shut down the machine guns. At last, Ripburger gets his just desserts.

Climb back into the road-plane. It's about to explode — eeek! Climb on your bike — walk to the left side of the plane and you'll see it. Use it, and take off! And, er, that's it. Was it as good for you as it was for us? Of course it was...

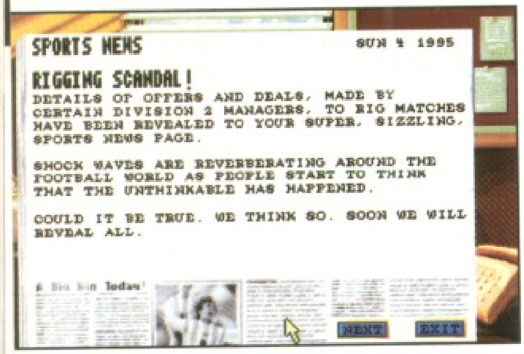
Ultimate Soccer Manager

Ultimate Soccer Manager, eh? It may well be — but are you? If not, then follow our hints to instant Venables-dom.




THE BANK ACCOUNT OF BLACKPOOL

BALANCE 5,021,663
OVERDRAFT LIMIT 0
CASH AVAILABLE 5,021,663
DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 0


SPORTS NEWS SUN 4 1995

RIGGING SCANDAL!
DETAILS OF OFFERS AND DEALS, MADE BY CERTAIN DIVISION 2 MANAGERS, TO RIG MATCHES HAVE BEEN REVEALED TO YOUR SUPER, SIZZLING, SPORTS NEWS PAGE.

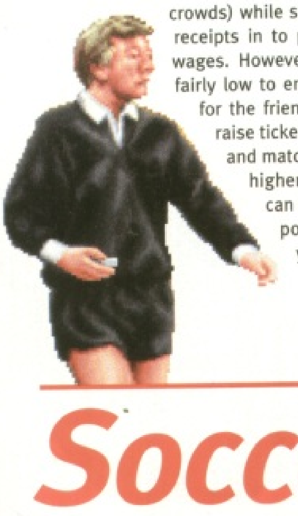
SHOCK WAVES ARE REVERBERATING AROUND THE FOOTBALL WORLD AS PEOPLE START TO THINK THAT THE UNTHINKABLE HAS HAPPENED.

COULD IT BE TRUE. WE THINK SO. SOON WE WILL REVEAL ALL.

The boy did good.. or did he? If your first efforts at USM left you broke after half a season and bottom of the Vauxhall Conference then clearly you're making life far too hard for yourself. We know you start with the option to kick off with paltry amounts of dosh, but here's your first tip — £5million doesn't half make your first season simpler, so don't be a martyr and take the money.

Money, Money, Money...

On the subject of finances, you really need to start off right. Use the two weeks of friendlies to make stadium improvements (thereby not losing attendence when you would have had capacity crowds) while still getting some gate receipts in to pay the players their wages. However, keep ticket prices fairly low to entice some punters in for the friendlies. Don't forget to raise ticket prices for cup games and matches against clubs in a higher division, since you can fleece their away supporters for more than your own fans.



In the first weeks get ground improvements under way. In later seasons inflation will have pushed up building costs — increases you could well do without. You'll want the biggest, plushest merchandising and food outlets you can afford because these'll bring in much more money. Put them evenly around the ground, avoiding low capacity stands. Putting the best outlets near high capacity stands really helps. Also, try building yourself a 10,000 seater stand to help attendences.

If the folks still aren't coming through the gates (i.e. your team can't win a game for love nor money) then you might want to give away 6,000 tickets. These don't bring you any profit in themselves, but empty seats don't buy merchandise or food, which supporters do. Crafty, eh?

In the longer term, try to ensure that you have an all-seater stadium by the time you leave the second division. This is important since the FA has a nasty habit of condemning terraces when teams get promoted to the first. Stay in the cups for as long as you can to increase the gate from these lucrative matches. Increase your ticket prices and merchandise costs once a year or more, hiking them by about 10%. And whatever you do, don't let the assistant manager deal with advertising revenue. He's a dozey so-and-so when it comes to ad deals, so you're far better off doing it for yourself.

Can You Manage?

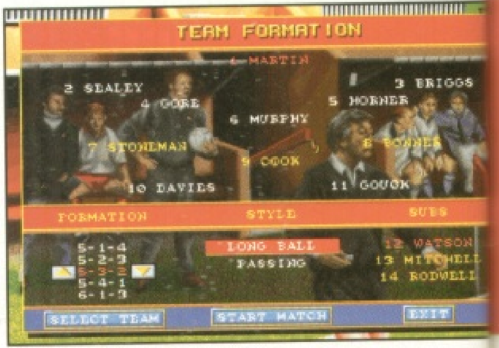
With the money side sewn up, it's now only necessary to win the games. The important thing here is to keep the chairman happy, since he's the bloke who'll sack you if your approval rating falls below 10%. You'll also be out on your ear if your job security falls below 20% (job security is the average of the chairman, players, fans and bank opinions of you).

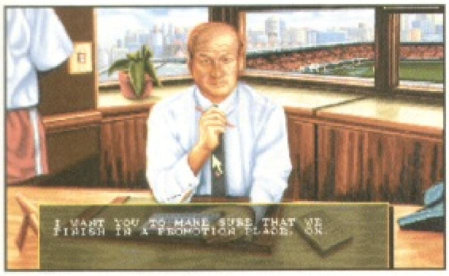
The assistant manager is a useful fellow when it comes to team formation and selection, so take his advice. Meanwhile, keep training the squad, keep the coaches happy (by paying them lots), and get the best staff you can — a superb coach is three times as efficient as an average one. The other bunch of people to keep up with is the youth team. Keep them training, and they'll improve to be good players far faster than the A-team squad.

Early on, go to the bank and get an overdraft to buy the best goalie and strikers you can lay your hands on. If players from higher divisions refuse to come down to your level, then buy guys over 33 years old who're more likely to say 'Yes'. However, rotate the squad to give everybody experience and good morale. Leaving guys on the bench is a bad deal, even if they're not your star players.

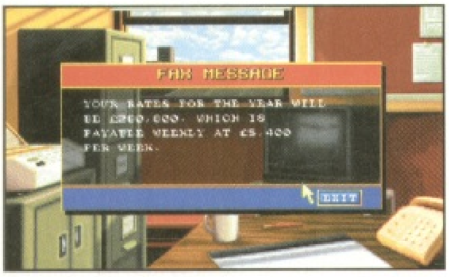
If the opposition fields a particularly good striker then you might want to double team a pair of defenders onto him, to get him out of the game. Check the opponent's formation and adjust yours before

GRIFFIN PARK
BRENTFORD 1
BRENTFOM13 40
BLACKPOOL 1
GOAL!
GOUCK
PAUSE
X4
11 GOUCK



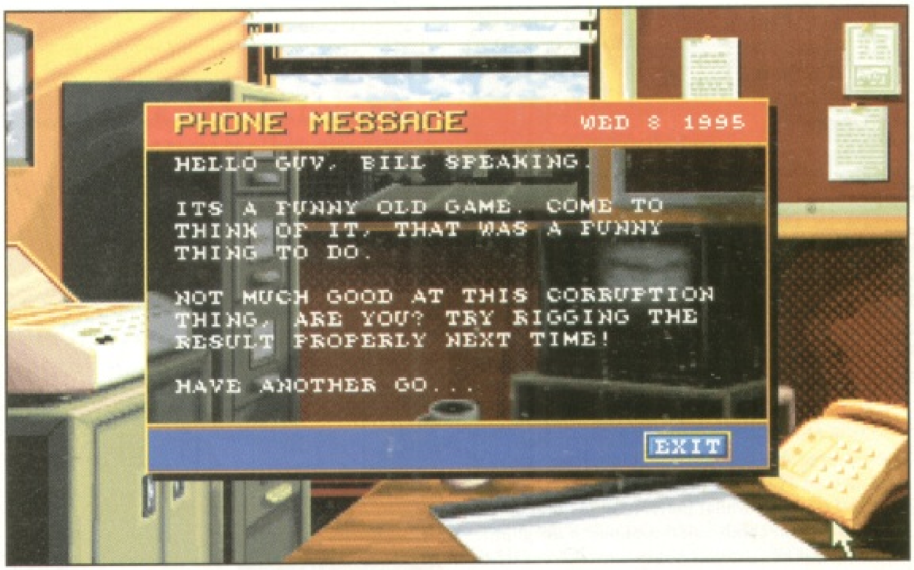


I WANT YOU TO MAKE SURE THAT WE FINISH IN A PROMOTION PLACE. OK.



FAX MESSAGE

YOUR RATES FOR THE YEAR WILL BE £280,000. WHICH IS PAYABLE WEEKLY AT £5,400 PER WEEK.



PHONE MESSAGE WED 8 1995

HELLO GUV. BILL SPEAKING.

ITS A FUNNY OLD GAME. COME TO THINK OF IT, THAT WAS A FUNNY THING TO DO.

NOT MUCH GOOD AT THIS CORRUPTION THING, ARE YOU? TRY RIGGING THE RESULT PROPERLY NEXT TIME!

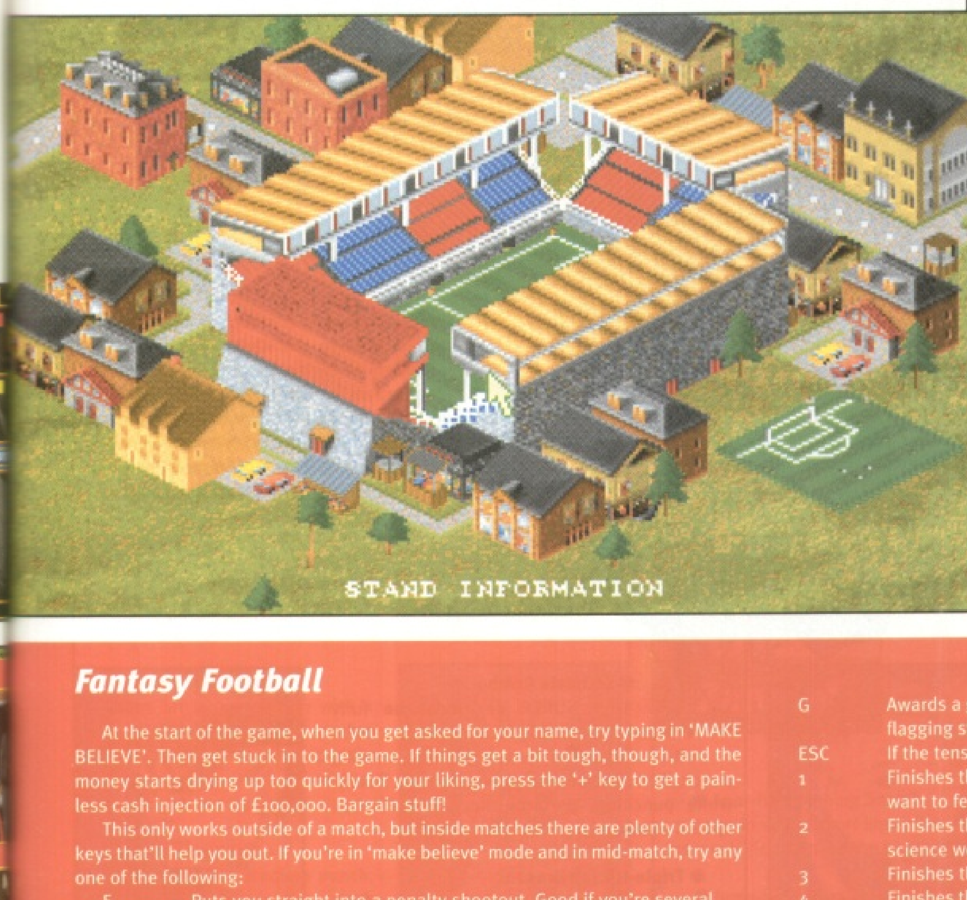
HAVE ANOTHER GO...

each game to compensate. Also, don't go for the 'Instant Results' option. By watching what's going on you can give orders to players as the game develops, making best use of the whole team.

That Grobbelaar Feeling

So it's not enough that you read our hints and became a managing genius overnight. The opposition are still doing better and you're short of the readies. What do you do? Start playing dirty, of course... no, not by fouling more (although that might well help), but by using underhand management techniques. Naturally, the key is in not getting caught and becoming the next tabloid headline like so many before you. If you have the game-rigging options on, then bear the following in mind and you could advance a lot quicker than is otherwise normal:

The computer sets up one in five of the clubs in the game as corruptible right from the start, and these never change. That means the odds high, with 80% never accepting an offer of cash to rig a game or a transfer market bung. However, you get a couple of chances to get away with your sneaky manoeuvres.



Whenever you make an unsuccessful corrupt offer or bet against your own team there's only a 50/50 chance of being spotted. That means that half the time you'll get away Scott free even if you picked the wrong team to try it on with. Not that corruptable teams will automatically accept your offers — a formula is used to decide whether or not they'll be interested, taking into account all sorts of things from the size of the club, their League position, the value of the offer, and a random variable.

If you *are* caught, then... nothing happens. That's right, corruption is so rife in the game of football that nobody even blinks an eye when you get sussed the first time. The second time, however, the papers pick up on your disgraceful behaviour and print a report of your underhand activities in their Sunday editions.Assuming that eventually you get caught again, like the rotten to the core individual you are, then you can fully expect a formal warning against you and your scandelous actions. Finally, after being spotted for a fourth time, you get the sack and can kiss your career goodbye. This may sound harsh, but then again you have had three warnings after all.

In fact, there's also a 5% chance of your first little indescretion being totally forgotten for each week that passes, a fact that should help in the long term. Speaking of which, in the long term you may notice the value of your palm-greasing antics going down. This is because of inflation, which affects things to the tune of around about 5% per season.

Fantasy Football

At the start of the game, when you get asked for your name, try typing in 'MAKE BELIEVE'. Then get stuck in to the game. If things get a bit tough, though, and the money starts drying up too quickly for your liking, press the '+' key to get a painless cash injection of £100,000. Bargain stuff!

This only works outside of a match, but inside matches there are plenty of other keys that'll help you out. If you're in 'make believe' mode and in mid-match, try any one of the following:

E	Puts you straight into a penalty shootout. Good if you're several goals down with only ten minutes left to play in the game.
F	Gives away a foul.
G	Awards a goal to whoever last passed the ball (very handy to boost flagging strikers' statistics).
ESC	If the tension gets too much then this ends the half prematurely.
1	Finishes the match with a 1-0 scoreline. (For cheaters who don't want to feel as if they're cheating too much.)
2	Finishes the match with a 2-0 scoreline. (For cheaters who's conscience won't get the better of them.)
3	Finishes the match with a 3-0 scoreline. (Shame on you.)
4	Finishes the match with a 0-1 scoreline. (For away games, of course.)
5	The 0-2 equivalent of '4' above.
6	Like 5, but guarantees a stunning victory on the road of 0-3.

Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo

It's Street Fighting time! We've got the skills, we've got the thrills and we also got the ultimate players guide to the best beat-'em-up on PC! Why, we've even suggested a couple of killer combos for each character too!

What It All Means...

U	Up.
D	Down.
F	Forward.
B	Back.
Roll	Rotate pad or stick through 360 degrees.
P	Punch.
K	Kick.
All P	Hit all punch buttons.
All K	Hit all kick buttons.
Charge	Hold direction of stick.

Note that Super moves can only be performed when the SUPER bar is flashing.

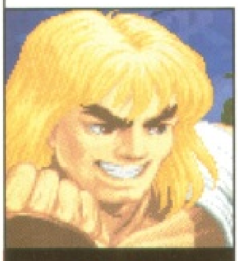
AMMY
PLAYER SELECT
KEN
2P
U.S.A.

Ken is probably the most popular character of all the Street Fighters. With the ability to launch himself forwards whilst performing his dragon punch, he can catch most opponents off guard. However, if the dragon doesn't make contact this leaves him wide open for a killer counter-combo.

Fireball	D, DF, F, P
Dragon Punch	F, D, DF, P
Roundhouse Kick	D, DF, D, K
Cyclone Kick	D, DB, B, K
Super Dragon Punch	F, D, DF, F, D, DF, P

● **Triple-Hit Combo**

Jump in with a strong punch, immediately throw a medium punch, then perform the Dragon Punch.



Ken

● **Ultimate Combo**

Your SUPER bar must be fully charged before you attempt this combo attack. Jump in with a hard punch, then immediately perform a crouching strong kick. Finally, while Ken is in mid-kick, perform the Super Dragon Punch.

Chun-Li is, in case you didn't know, the greatest woman fighter of all time. Her various aerial attacks and deadly 'Spinning Bird' kick make her a top choice for players of all abilities. Chun-Li spends most of her time in the air making her a little vulnerable to attack, but overall she's a very well-rounded character indeed.

Fireball	Charge-B, F, P
100-Foot Kick	Tap kick rapidly
Rising Bird Kick	Charge-D, U, K
Spinning Bird Kick	Charge-B, F, K
Super Move	Charge-B, F, B, F, K

● **Triple Roundhouse Combo**

Jump in with a strong punch then, when you've landed, do a standing medium punch. Complete with a crouching roundhouse.

● **Standing Whirlwind Combo**

Jump in with a strong kick while charging for the Rising Bird Kick special move. When you've landed, begin the motion of the Rising Bird Kick then, precisely at the motion's mid-point, throw a strong punch before completing the move.

Chun-Li

Ryu is a well-balanced character, making him a deadly foe. Ryu and Ken have roughly the same abilities, but with a few minor variations in their techniques. Ryu's kicks are more powerful than Ken's, making his Cyclone Kick more deadly. Another difference is his Dragon Punch — rather than launch himself forward as Ken does, Ryu punches directly vertically, protecting him from aerial attacks.

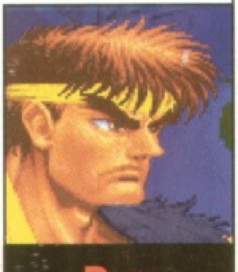
Fireball	D, DF, F, P
Flameball	B, DB, D, DF, F, P
Dragon Punch	F, D, DF, P
Cyclone Kick	D, DB, B, K
Super Fireball	D, DF, F, D, DF, F, P

● **Ultimate Combo**

Your SUPER bar must be fully charged before you attempt this combo attack. Start off by jumping in with a strong punch, then do a crouching weak punch. Finally, while punching, perform the Super Fireball special attack.

● **Triple-Hit Jab Dragon**

Jump in with a strong punch then, as you land, throw a strong elbow attack and finish off with a weak Dragon Punch.



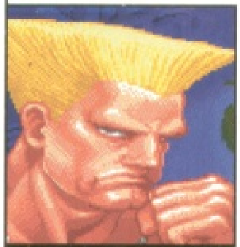
Ryu

All Artwork © CAPCOM 1991-95

Guile

Guile is the best player for counter-attack moves. His Flash Kick is awesome against many of the characters. This kick can often catch players of their guard, thus making them open for attack. Guile is a very good fighter to learn with, but his speed leaves something to be desired.

Flash Kick	Charge-D, U, K
Sonic Boom	Charge-B, F, P
Super Move	Charge-DB, DF, DB, UF, K



- **Four-Hit Combo**

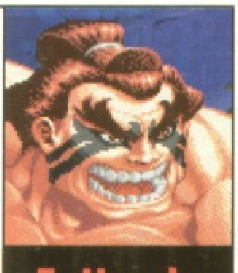
Jump in towards the opponent and charge down at the start of your jump. Before you land tap strong punch then, after you've landed, uppercut and finish off with the Flash Kick

- **Two-In-One Combo**

Charge back and do a medium punch, then immediately throw the Sonic Boom. Finish off with a strong punch.

E. Honda

The big man of the game, E Honda's technique relies on brute strength rather than skill. Honda is very slow but he can reach quite a distance with his kicks and punches, making him dangerous character. He's not that good in a one-player game, but he can be a laugh when played against a friend.



Sumo Press	Charge-D, U, K
100-Hand Slap	Tap punch rapidly
Orchido Throw	F, DF, D, DB, B ,P
Torpedo	Charge-B, F, P
Super Move	Charge-B, F, B, F, P

- **Two-In-One Headbutt**

Charge down & back and throw a medium punch, followed immediately by a headbutt.

- **Three-Hit Knee Combo**

Jump in with a strong punch then, on landing, press strong kick for a double knee attack.

Dhalsim

Dhalsim is one of the worst characters in the game. Even though he has fire projectiles and the ability to teleport, he's extremely slow. His best line of attack is to teleport, reappearing next to his foe and throwing him. Dhalsim is also very predictable, making him very vulnerable to attack.

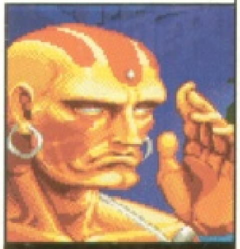
Yoga Teleport	(Far) F, D, DF, All P
Yoga Teleport	(Near) F, D, DF, All K
Yoga Flame	B, DB, D, DF, F, P
Yoga Fire	D, DF, F, P
Super Move	B, DB, D, DF, F, B, DB, D, DF, F, P

- **Three-Hit Headbutt Combo**

Move in close and hit with a weak punch, then press strong punch for a double headbutt.

- **Crouching Two-In-One**

Move down and use a weak kick, then immediately cast a Yoga Flame or Yoga Fire.



Blanka

Blanka is probably the most violent and bloodthirsty character in Street Fighter. He's also by far the easiest character to pick up too, thus making him a very agile combatant. Blanka has a vast range of close counter attacks which enable him to floor an opponent quite quickly, but all his moves really depend on an aerial attack, making him very vulnerable when landing.

Roll	Charge-B, F, P
Vertical Roll	Charge-D, U, K
Step-Back Roll	Charge-B, F, K
Electricity	Tap punch rapidly
Beast Lunge	B, All P
Super Move	Charge-B, F, B, F, P

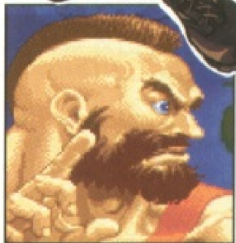
- **Triple Hit**

Start off by jumping in with a strong kick then, when you've landed, throw a medium punch. Finish your opponent off with a crouching strong punch.

- **Shocking Combo**

Jump in with a medium punch, then immediately tap the punch button repeatedly to electrocute your foe.

Zangief



Zangief is a power house of complex moves with devastating effects. All of his moves require awkward commands, making him very difficult to control, but once mastered he's excellent — Zangief has an array of throws and slams which can drain half of the opponent's energy, but be warned that he can't throw any projectiles and he is slow.

Super Punch	F, DF, D, P
Lariat	All P or All K
Atomic Suplex	Roll, K (Close)
Power Bomb	Roll, K (Near)
Pile Driver	Roll, P
Super Move	Roll, Roll, P

- **Four-Hit Spinning Snatch**

Jump in with a short knee dive. Land, crouch and throw a weak punch. Next use a crouching weak kick then, as the kick hits, immediately pull off a spinning pile driver.

- **Jump-In Clothes Line**

Jump in with a medium punch then, after the punch has made devastating contact, tap all the punch buttons.

The Bruce Lee of the game, Fei Long is very quick with his various kicks and punches, especially his brilliant Rekka Ken punch. This character cannot cast any projectiles — instead he has a Dragon Kick which is brilliant against aerial attacks. Fei Long is a very good fighter and is excellent at performing combo moves.

Dragon Kick	B, D, DB, K
Flash Kick	B, DB, D DF, F, FU, K
Rekka Ken	D, DF, F, P (can perform multiple hits)
Super Move	D, DF, F, D, DF, F, P

● Repeat Rekka Ken

Rush and attack the enemy with the first Rekka Ken punch then, after the first hit strikes home, repeat the motion two more times for a three-hit combo.

● Rekka Ken To Rising Dragon

Rush and attack the enemy with two Rekka Ken attacks, then immediately follow up with a Rising Dragon.

Fei Long

This is one of the top bosses to control — with his high and low projectile attacks in tandem with his strong uppercut, he makes for one very tough opponent. Although Sagat is a little slow on his feet, he more than makes up for it with his impressive range of high and low attacks. Finally, be warned — try not to dodge over projectiles because he cannot jump very high!

Tiger Shot	D, DF, F, P
Low Tiger Shot	D, DF, F, K
Tiger Uppercut	F, DF, F, P
Tiger Knee	D, DF, F, UF, K
Super Move	D, DF, F, D, DF, P

Sagat

● Upper Combo

Jump in with a strong kick. Do a crouching weak kick, then begin the motion for a Tiger Uppercut special move. Complete the uppercut for an easy combo.

● Round House Tiger Combo

Jump in with a deep roundhouse. As you land, immediately press weak kick, and begin the motion for a strong Tiger Uppercut. Finish the uppercut for a killer combo.

With his aerial attacks Vega is very good in air combat. When using Vega you must be careful and try not to repeat moves because, again, he is a very predictable character and can be caught out easily. His most devastating move is his Air Suplex which causes huge amounts of damage. Be careful when playing expert players because Vega is a little slow.

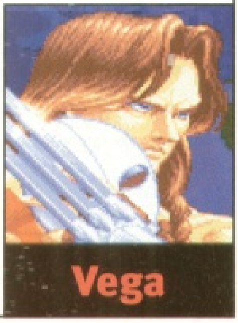
Barcelona Attack	Charge-D, U, K
Air Suplex	(In mid air) P after Barcelona Attack
Sky claw	Charge-D, U, P
Rolling Attack	Charge-B, F, P
Double Back flip	All P
Single Flip	All K
Flip Kick	Charge-DB, FU, K
Super Move	Charge-DB, DF, DB, UF, K

● Rolling Six Hit

Jump in with a strong kick while charging back. While you're still charging, throw a crouching weak punch, and begin the motion for a Roll Attack special move. Finish off with a strong Roll Attack.

● Slide Combo

Jump in with a strong kick. Once you've safely landed follow up by throwing a weak punch. Finish with a sliding kick.



Vega

This character is probably the best out of the BIG players — for his size he isn't that slow and his special dive is quite an asset against crouching opponents. To master this character properly will take some time, but it will pay off in the long run.

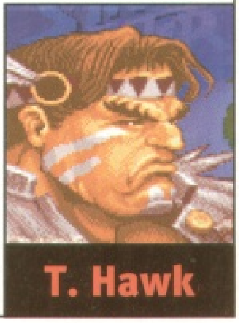
Vertical Dive	F, D, DF, P
Condor Dive	(In mid air) All P
Mexican Typhoon	Roll, P
Super Move	Roll, Roll, P

● Three-Hit Vertical Dive Combo

Do a low weak punch, then hit out with a medium punch followed by the Vertical Dive motion. Finish with a strong Vertical Dive

● Three-Hit Combo

Jump in with a strong punch, then do a straight weak punch. Finish with a crouching strong kick.



T. Hawk

Balrog

Because Balrog is a boxer, all of his moves are punches. But don't be put off — some of his attacks have a better reach than most kicks. Most of his strong attacks require him to dash across the screen, leaving him open to low kicks. Balrog is not a very good character to play as because of his predictable moves and he's also a little slow.

Shoulder Barge	Charge-D, U, P
Swing Punch	Charge-All P
Turn Uppercut	Charge-All K
Uppercut Dash	Charge-B, F, K
Dash Punch	Charge-F, P
Ultimate Upper	Charge-B, DF, K
Ultimate Straight	Charge-B, DF, P
Super Move	Charge-B, F, B, F, P

- **Super Stomach Blows**

Jump in with a strong punch while charging back. Throw a standing medium punch while still charging back. As soon as you see the punch make contact, throw a strong dashing punch.

- **Puncherama**

Jump in with a strong punch attack. Land and toss a crouching weak punch. Finish off with a crouching roundhouse.

Dee Jay

Dee Jay's moves are based upon kick boxing, so it comes as no surprise that he has many different and powerful kicks — his Double Dred Kick is one of the most powerful attacks in the game and, if done well, it can leave your opponents staggering. Dee Jay is a good character to play with, because of this.

Double Dred Kick	Charge-B, F, K
Psych Out	Charge-B, F, P
Jack Knife	Charge-D, U, K
Super Uppercut	Charge-D, Tapping U
Super Move	Charge-B, F, B, F, K

- **Four-Hit Dred Combo**

Jump in with a strong punch while charging back. Do a standing medium punch, and then immediatly start the motion for the Dred Kick. Finish with a strong Dred Kick.

- **Hyper Fist Combo**

Jump in with a medium punch whilst charging down. When you land (still charging down, mind), crouch and hit with a weak punch followed by the Hyper Fist.

Cammy

Cammy is a very agile player who uses her legs as a means of attack. Combos are quite hard to perform when using Cammy, but her Cannon Drill and Spinning Knuckle moves are excellent to make your opponent dizzy. Be careful when performing the rising kick, because landing take some time, leaving her open to attack.

Rising Kick	F, DF, F, K
Cannon Drill	D, DF, F, K
Spinning Knuckle	B, DB, D, DF, F, P
Slide	B, DB, D, DF, F, FU, P
Super Move	D, DF, F, D, DF, F, K

- **Head Punch To Spinning Knuckle**

Jump in with a medium punch then, as soon as you land, crouch for a low weak punch. Finish with a Thrust Kick

- **Cannon Drill Three-Hit Combo**

Jump in with a strong punch. Do a standing medium punch, then begin the Cannon Drill motion. Finish with a strong Cannon Drill.

This is the easiest character to control because of his simple move commands, and for the other player he is the most confusing fighter to battle. When playing as Bison you'll find that he is a little slow and pulling off combos can be difficult. Even though he's easy to control he's best left to the expert players because his moves are quite hard to string together.

Double Kick	Charge-B, F, K
Psycho Crusher	Charge-B, F, P
Head Stomp	Charge-D, U, K
Super Move	Charge-B, F, B, F, K

- **Psycho Combo**

Jump in and start charging back. Just before you eventually land, attack with a strong punch. Then, while still charging back, perform a crouching weak punch. Finally, as you throw the weak punch, perform the Psycho Crusher to completely annihilate your opponent.

- **Triple-Hit Combo**

Jump in and immediately attack with a strong punch attack. Upon landing throw a medium punch from the crouching position. Stand up, hesitate for the briefest of moments, then finish off your opponent with a medium kick.

M. Bison

Ahoy, me hearties! Tips for Impressions' sails-'n'-scurvy trading game approaching off the starboard bow! Prepare to repel all boarders...

High Seas Trader

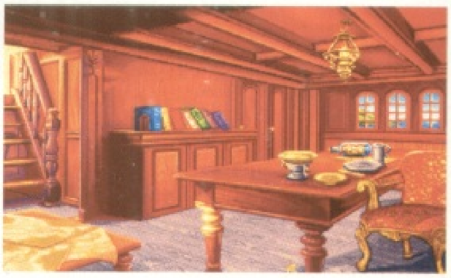
Setting Sail...

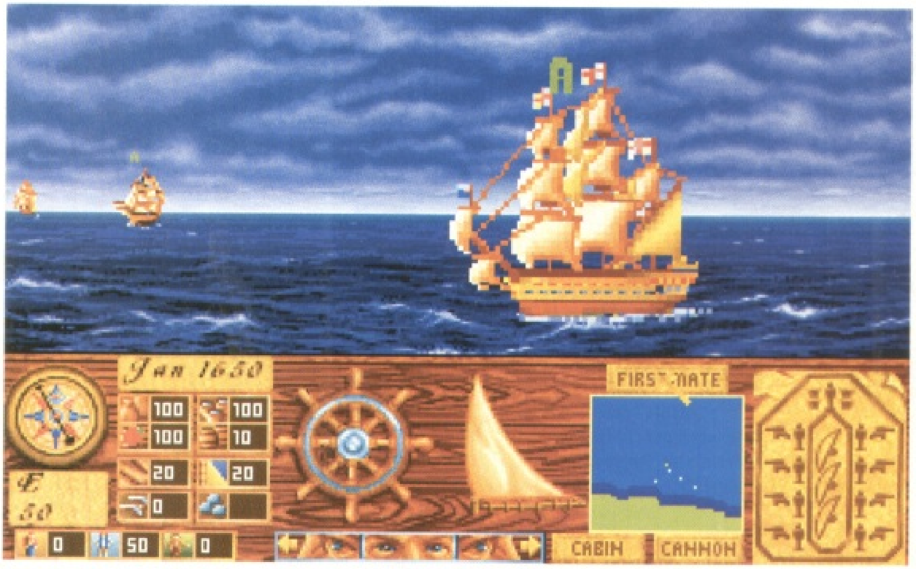
Your goal in High Seas Trader is simple: become the best darn merchant sailing the seven seas. To do this you have to rise up the serried ranks of the merchant's guild, which is achieved by increasing your rating in four main skill categories: daring, honour, loyalty and nobility.

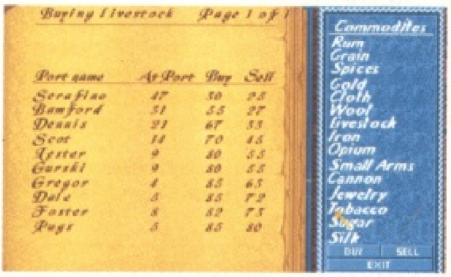
You start the game with the lowly status of Peddler, but with a bit of effort you'll soon become a Journeyman, then a Tradesman, a Merchant, a Master Merchant and, finally, a Viscount. Well, to be honest, 'a bit of effort' is something of an understatement — it actually takes a *lot* of effort. But don't worry — we're here to make life easier.

One of the first decisions you have to make regards what nationality you're going to be. This is actually a lot more important that it initially seems, because it determines where your home port will be, what your relationship with the other ships you encounter will be and, if your nation is at war with other nations, whether you're allowed access to certain key ports or not. Obviously, each nationality has its own set of plus and minus points, so experiment with all of them to find which suits you best.

The game starts with your ship moored in your home port. Your first stop should be the local tavern — as in every computer game, the boozer is a mine of information. Talk to the bartender, because he may be able to give you some insider knowledge on the state of the international trade market.







Buying Livestock Page 1 of 1

Port name	At Port	Buy	Sell
Serafiao	47	50	25
Bamford	31	55	27
Dennis	21	67	33
Scot	14	70	45
Lester	9	80	55
Gorski	9	80	55
Gregor	4	85	65
Dale	5	85	72
Foster	8	82	75
Pugs	5	85	80

While in the tavern it's wise to enlist some new crew members — you're best bets at first are either soldiers skilled in combat or cheap apprentices. Take care to check a potential recruit's morale before you bring them aboard, because this will affect the whole crew's morale. (Incidentally, if your crew's morale becomes low later on in the game, take 'em all down the pub and buy them a couple of rounds — this will cheer them up no end.)

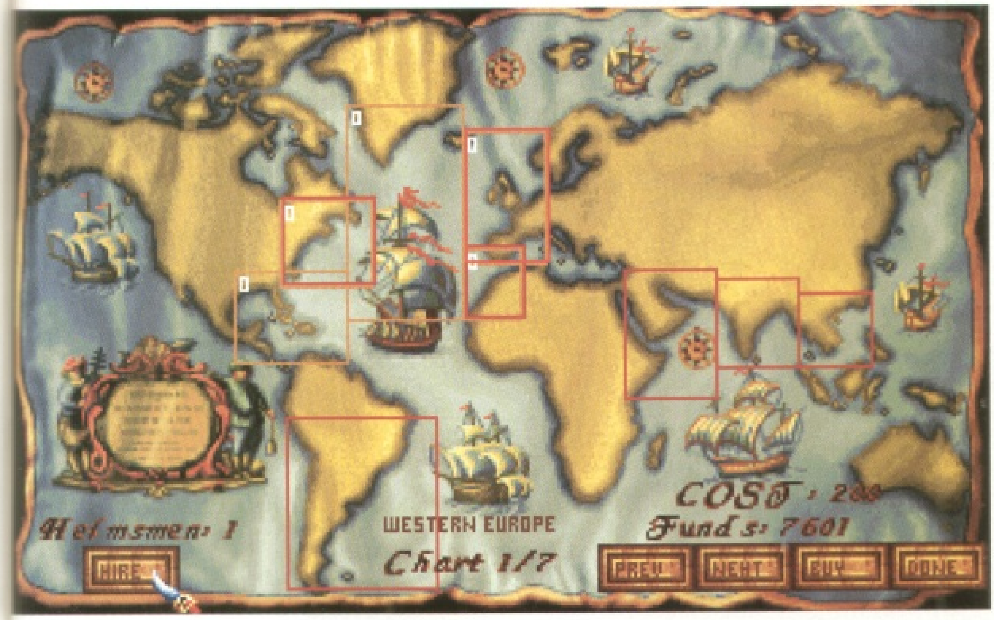
Before setting sail, be sure to store a healthy reserve of gold in the bank as an insurance policy. This way your game won't end immediately if your ship is lost at sea later in the game.

Market Forces

As any businessman (or businesswoman) will tell you, one of the major keys to success is to start small and then build up slowly. Don't undertake long and risky voyages straight away — instead, embark on short trading runs. Okay, so they may not generate big bucks, but it's relatively easy money.

After a while you should have saved up a nice little nest egg, allowing you to invest in a larger crew, big-

London
Enter Charthouse



ger cannons and eventually great ships, whereupon you can start travelling further afield. This is essential, because the more ports you visit, the higher your standing in merchant society will become.

Ferrying passengers from one port to another can be very profitable, but remember that the more passengers you have onboard, the less cargo you can carry — each passenger takes up the equivalent of one ton of space in your hold. Remember that it's only worth taking a passenger if you're already heading towards where they want to go.

Also, although it may sound attractive, resist the lure of transporting contraband. If you don't then chances are you'll find yourself in a fight as soon as you take to the sea. And even if you win the fight, your former colleagues will come down on you and brand you as a common smuggler.

Controlling The Crew

A ship's crew will follow its captain to the ends of the Earth — so long as they know where those ends are. It's not a good idea to sail your ship into uncharted waters, or else your men may start a mutiny. To avoid this sad state of affairs, buy all the charts you can until you have one of each kind. Then you'll only need to buy new ones to update the zones of piracy.

Try to build up as big a crew as you can possibly afford, but keep a very careful eye on your supplies, particularly your rations. Remember that fruit spoils over time so you'll need to stock more of it than you would other rations.

Maintaining your crew's morale and health is essential to your success. If the mood on the ship starts turning nasty give the crew a shot of rum or treat them to a trip down the pub. If health begins to flag, up the rations.

Fire At Will!

If you want to attack and plunder other ships, then use Chain Shot in your cannons — this will rip apart your quarry's sails, bringing them to a halt and leaving them vulnerable to a boarding party. If you use Round Shot then this is likely to hole your target, and the booty will end up at the bottom of the sea. However, bear in mind that Chain Shot and Grape Shot have a much shorter range than Round Shot.

To avoid being boarded yourself — or, at least, to make sure you have a fighting chance of survival should you ever get boarded — make sure that there's at least one unit of small arms for each crew member on your ship. Also, remember that a soldier with a gun is, perhaps unsurprisingly, four times more effective than an apprentice with a gun.

Never be afraid to run from a fight if you're losing. When you're starting out, you might want to sell your cannon, ammo and repair supplies so that you free up some cash and extra room in your hold. Although this leaves you unarmed, it also leaves you a lot lighter, so you'll be able to outrun any attackers with ease.

Finally, although the life of a pirate may sound very romantic and exciting, it's almost impossible to make a living from. As soon as you open fire on any native or friendly ships, you'll find yourself the enemy of everyone and have absolutely no hiding place to run to when you're wounded.

Damage Control

The sea is a deadly place. As well as natural dangers such as storms or submerged reefs, there's also the threat posed by rival merchants and pirates to deal with. If you think it's likely that combat will occur on your next voyage, buy in a stock of repair materials, such as planks, so that you can patch up any damage to your ship while still at sea.

If your ship becomes severely damaged and starts taking on water, then it's sensible to do something about it pretty damn quick! Depending on the situation, unman the cannons or lower your sails so that you free up some crewmen — these can then be assigned to bilge duty.

When upgrading your ship, bear in mind that it really is a false economy to go for the cheap-'n'-cheerful options unless you absolutely have to — with the exception of sails, lower-quality ship components will be damaged more easily than higher-quality ones.

If you're a bit short of the readies, and you don't have the cash to go for a full ship upgrade, then the next best thing to invest in is an upgrade for your cannons — you can't go wrong with good guns! Alternatively, only upgrade one side of the ship — and then make sure that you always keep that side towards the enemy during combat!

cheat lab

Is there no game safe from the cheating hands of the Power Up! crew? No way! Yup, if ever you're stuck in a game, don't waste time tearing your hair out or banging your head against the monitor in frustration. Instead, consult PC GAMES' legendary tips section — we're always here to help.

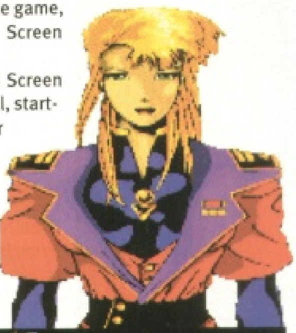
Chaos Control

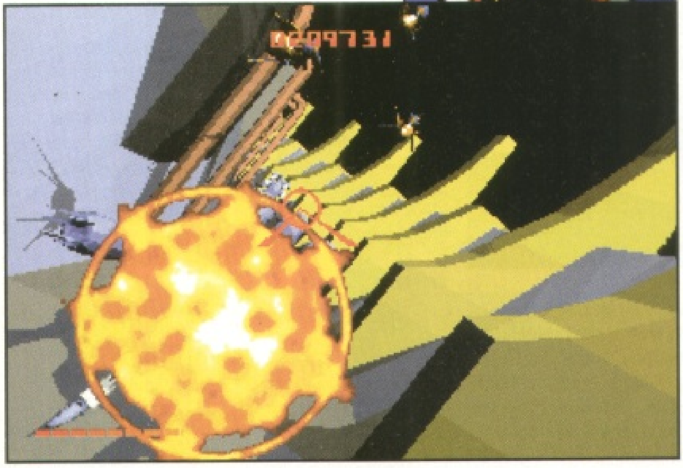
Philips/Infogrames

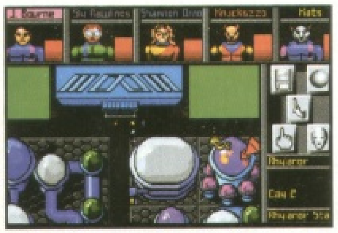
Please accept my sincerest condolences. If you're reading this, the chances are you've bought this abysmal CD-i conversion. Why didn't you listen to us? Last issue's review condemned it to the Pit Of Software Turkeys for all eternity, but did you take heed our advice? Obviously not.

All is not lost though. Chaos Control is a pretty tough game, and not everyone will be able to progress to the latter stages. If this is the case, don't fret, because we've found a way of accessing any section of the game, but to do it you need a screen dump utility — Screen Thief is ideal.

Before you boot up the Chaos Control, load Screen Thief into memory. Now play the game as normal, starting from Level 1. Next dump a screen onto your hard disk. This drastically slows the game down, confusing the enemy and making it virtually impossible for them to hit you. Now all you have to do is wait for the level to end, and you'll be able to start afresh on the next! Obviously, to skip to the following stages, repeat the process.







MegaTraveller 2

Action 16/Empire

Here's another game that's just been released on budget, so here's a handy cheat for all those who've only just discovered the delights of Empire's (space)ageing epic.

To get loads of money, talk to Trow Beckett who can be found near the University in Rhylander. He'll give you a locator, some coins and a diary. Drop them all, then select give and pick any character. Having done this, Trow will offer you a load of cash — anything from forty to over 2 million credits — in return for nothing at all! Repeat this process until you've boosted your bank balance to over 4 billion credits!

Warriors

Mindscape

Cracked a tooth on a stale knuckle sandwich? Fed up with fighting with the same old brawling beefcakes? Mindscape's Warriors is no pushover, especially the final big guy, The Master. So do you want it easy? You do? Well, try this for starters:

Wait for the main menu to appear before typing the word CHEAT. Having done this, another menu bar will appear, allowing access to the Secret Way. In this sub-menu, type any or all of the cheat codes you want, enabling them by flicking the relevant switchs to 'on'.

Right, here are the secret codes for choosing additional characters without special moves:

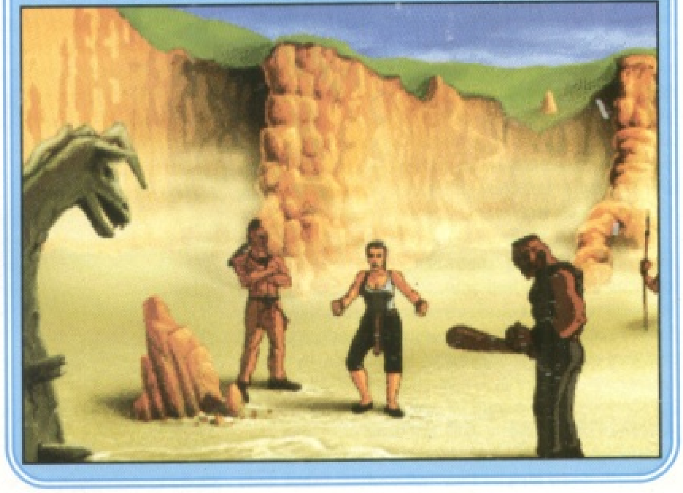
GARDENER	Tom Teck the Dwarf.
NUMBERONE	Captain Warrior.
MATE	Pamela.
DUNK	Scott.

To play as the all-powerful Master, simply type in ELEVENTH. He's a tough beast and should make the game much easier, especially if you learn all the following special moves:

RIGHT, RIGHT, PUNCH	Tentacle Grapple.
RIGHT, RIGHT, KICK	Green Power Beam.
LEFT, RIGHT, PUNCH	Come 'ere!
LEFT, RIGHT, KICK	Summon Evil Spirits.

In addition to the extra fighters, try tapping on these passwords which affect the game in various ways:

CIRCUS	Allows you to fight in the Arena in the two-player mode.
REPLAY	Want to kick ass in the 3D Replay mode? You got it!
NOPAIN	Disables any weapons in the game.
TYSON	The characters now fight without using special attacks.
SNOWWHITE	Both fighters are turned into dwarves!
NOGAIN	Whatever happens, you won't lose your weapon.
FINALFIVE	The fight is set over five bouts rather than three.
NBK	It's a knockout — one bout fights only.
EVILDEATH	Gore mode!
RESURECTION	Allows you to continue even when you lose all your lives.
EASYSPECIALMOVES	Fairly self-explanitory, really.
FORQA	Tapping F1 wins the round.
	Hit F2 to skip directly to The Master.
	Boost your energy level by pressing F3 and F5.

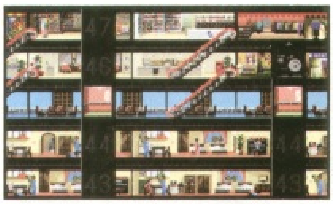


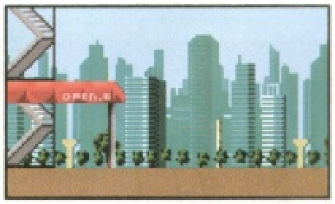
SimTower

Maxis

Well, looky here — a couple of cheats for struggling construction workers. To earn loads of cash in Maxis' nifty skyscraper sim, start a new tower as normal, placing a section of lobby as far to the left and underground as possible (below level B9). Guess what — your starting funds have doubled! Unfortunately it only works once per game though.

However, if you want to build bigger lobbies, try holding down CTRL when placing the first section of the lobby. To construct a 3-storey lobby, hold both CTRL and SHIFT when building.





Flashback

Kixx XL/US Gold

Okay, so it might be an oldy, but it's just been released on budget so for all of you cheapskates who've only just bought Delphine's classic, here is every single level code for each of the difficulty levels.

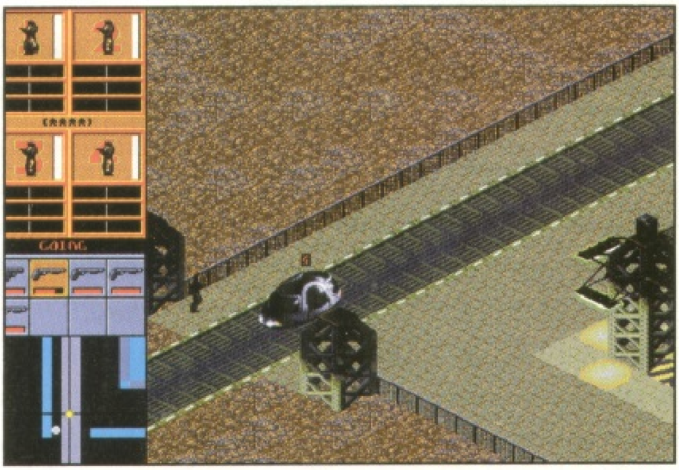
Easy Level	Normal Level	Hard Level
JAGUAR	BANTHA	TOHOLD
COMBEL	SHIVA	PICOLO
ANTIC	KASYYK	FUGU
NOLAN	SARLAC	CAPSUL
ARTHUR	MAENOC	ZZZAP
SHIRYU	SULUST	MANIAC
RENDER	NEPTUN	NOWAY

Syndicate

Electronic Arts

Wa-hey, another budget game that we've busted to bits! Yep, Bullfrog's excellent strategy shooter still stands proud against many of the latest releases, but entering the following company names will bring it to its knees.

COOPER TEAM	This awards you with a full Cryo chamber, complete with all modifications, weapons and equipment. Additionally you get 100 million in cash!
NUK TEAM	Dead agents are immediately resurrected.
ROB A BANK	Awards 100 billion dollars instantly.
WATCH THE CLOCK	Accelerates time.
TO THE TOP	Select any mission.
DO IT AGAIN	Having entered the code, press CONTROL and C simultaneously to complete a level.



cheat lab
Interactive

Another day, another reader helped. As ever, we regret we cannot give out tips over the phone, but if you jot your problem on a piece of paper and send it to the usual address, we'll endeavour to find a solution.

Dear Cheat Lab,

I'm stuck on Star Trek: Judgment Rites, in No Man's Land. I have found two of the three power items, but I can't get the third. Where do I get it from?

Simon Ball,
Ipswich.

Hmm, from what you've explained I presume the item you're looking for is the locket. The locket belongs to the wounded soldier who can be found lying in the trench to the west of the town. Examine him, using the science tricorder to analyse his wounds before healing them with the medi-kit. Talk to him about his girlfriend and take the letter, giving it to the barmaid inside the inn. When you return to the solider, he'll hand over the locket. With the locket in hand, Kirk needs the TNT from the armoury, but I'll let you work that one out for yourself.

Dear Cheat Lab,

I know it's sad, but I have got Space Ace and haven't managed to beat Borf yet. Can you give me the complete solution?

Mr K. Jones,
London.

Oh dear. You forked out forty quid for Space Ace. The best tip I can give you is to take it back to the shop and get your money back. You don't want to? Okay, be like that. Anyway, we haven't got room for the full solution, but try typing DODEMODEXTER or BORF and all will be revealed.

Dear Cheat Lab,

I've tried everything but no matter what, I just can't complete Return To Zork. I think I'm quite near to the end, but have just come to a halt by the Dwarven Mines. I think I have to place various objects on the statues, but I don't know which ones. Please, help me!

J. Edwards,
Taunton.

First of all you need all six pieces of the disc of Frobozz. If you haven't got them, here's where they're hidden:

The first is found by completing the sliding block puzzle by the ruins, while the second can be found by cleaning up the Waif's present using the soap and water found in the kitchen in Snoot's Farm. Piece three is hidden inside the Boar Memorial in the forest, and can only be reached by cracking open the statue using the Dwarven sword.

Number four is inside the ship-in-a-bottle inside Canuk's shack, while another section can be collected by giving a piece of Illumynite to the lighthouse keeper. Finally, the last piece is given to you by Cliff from the Comedy Club, but only after you've told four jokes.

Next you need to join all these objects together, by visiting the Ancient Ruins and placing the following objects on the statues: Witch Itah's stick, a Vulture talon, the Thermos, the Dwarven helmet, the box, the shield and finally the Tele-Orb. Place the disc pieces on the altar at the bottom and press the red button to fuse them together.

With the completed disc in hand, visit the map section which is impassable, by the Cliffs Of Depression. Throw this at the wall and it will shatter, allowing you to continue your quest. Good luck — you'll need it!

Dear Cheat Lab,

I've only just got Populous, but was wondering if you've got any hints or tips?

Chris Nicholls,
Leeds.

Blimey, talk about getting straight to point! Well, fine, if it's good enough for you, it's good enough for us, so no, we haven't got any tips for Populous. We've got a cheat instead, though. Type KILLUSPAL on the title screen to warp to Level 999. Handy, eh?

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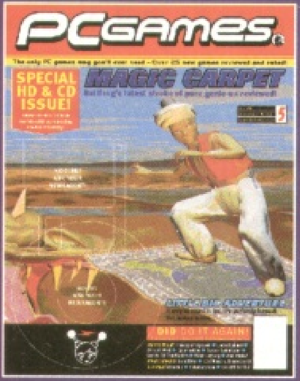
Issue 5

In our first CD issue, we took a long hard look at Magic Carpet, LBA, Transport Tycoon and Aces Of The Deep. And, if that wasn't enough, we previewed Loadstar and DID's Chopper. On the disk we had The Clue! and on the CD there was Retribution and LBA.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SPECIAL HD & CD ISSUE!
MAGIC CARPET

Issue 6

In Issue 6 we sank our teeth into Ecstatica, took to the skies with US Navy Fighters and fumbled our way through Kyrandia 3. We also previewed every game coming your way in '95 and on the disks and the CD we featured Flight of the Amazon Queen, NASCAR Racing, Magic Carpet and Cyberwar.

PCGAMES
Under a Killing Moon
Ecstatica
CD-ROM EDITION!

HD ONLY

Issue 7

You missed Issue 7? Why? We had the first review of Origin's Wing Commander 3 and finally got to grips with Rise Of The Robots. We also took a peek at 3D-Ware and previewed Alone 3 and Dungeon Master 2, while on the disks we featured Bullfrog's Tube and 450Mb of The Making Of Wing 3!

PCGAMES
COMMANDER BLOOD
WING COMMANDER 3
EXCLUSIVE! COMPLETE GAME!

HD ONLY

Issue 8

Id Software proved that they are the 3D kings with Heretic. Not only could you play the Heretic demo but we gave you the review, as well as analysis of KA-50 Hokum and EarthSiege. We also peeked at UFO 2, Sim Isle and Frontier 2. And disks? Well, we had Heretic, US Navy Fighters and Descent to keep you happy...

PCGAMES
HERETIC
WINGS OF GLORY
CES!

Issue 9

X-COM (or UFO 2) rose from the depths to grace our cover. "It's wet and it's wild!" screamed the coverline — and for once it wasn't wrong. Also wild (if not so wet) were Discworld, Psycho Pinball and Descent. On the discs there were demos of X-COM, Prem. Manager 3. Dark Forces, Alone 3 and Wings Of Glory.

PCGAMES
WORLD EXCLUSIVE!
UFO TERROR FROM THE DEEP
DARK FORCES
WIN!

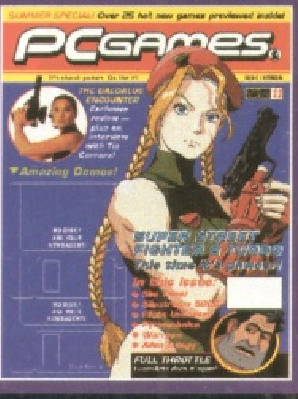
Issue 10

In another PC GAMES exclusive, we took the wraps off Cryo's Aliens. We also previewed hot new titles from Gremlin and reviewed Mortal Kombat 2, Lost Eden and BioForge. On the HDs there were demos of ClockWerx, Stardust, while on the CD there was BioForge, Lost Eden and Full Throttle.

PCGAMES
EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!
ALIENS
BIOFORGE
WIN!

Issue 11

The luscious Cammy from Super SF2 Turbo (oh, and Tia Carrere from The Daedalus Encounter) graced this month's cover, and both games were reviewed inside. On the disks there were playable demos of CyClones, Darker, SSF2Turbo, Slipstream 5000, Tank Commander and many more.


SUMMER SPECIAL! Over 25 hot new games previewed inside!
PCGAMES
Amazing Demos!
SUPER STREET FIGHTER II TURBO
FULL THROTTLE

Issue 12

Boba Fett, the galaxy's meanest bounty hunter, graced the cover of this issue, heralding the announcement of three new LucasArts games, including Rebel Assault 2! On the disks there were playable demos of Brett Hull Hockey '95, Ultimate Soccer Manager, Brain Dead 13, Thunderscape, Star Trek: TNG and more!

PCGAMES
EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!
REBEL ASSAULT 2
STAR TREK: TNG
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WIN!

An exclusive 36" hand-crafted Alien figure worth over £500, courtesy of Mindscape!

PLUS! 10 copies of the Aliens game, plus a pair of tickets to Alien War for the runners-up!

If you've been reading PC GAMES over the past few months, you will have undoubtedly filled your pants over our preview of Cryo's awesome new graphic adventure, Aliens. Based on the successful Dark Horse comic books, Aliens is one of the most visually astounding games ever to grace the PC

And to celebrate its forthcoming release this Autumn, Mindscape are giving away a *unique* 3-foot-high Alien model, hand-crafted and hand-painted exclusively for PC GAMES. We've also got ten copies of the excellent CD-ROM epic to give away, as well as 20 tickets to the Trocadero's scariest ride, Alien War!

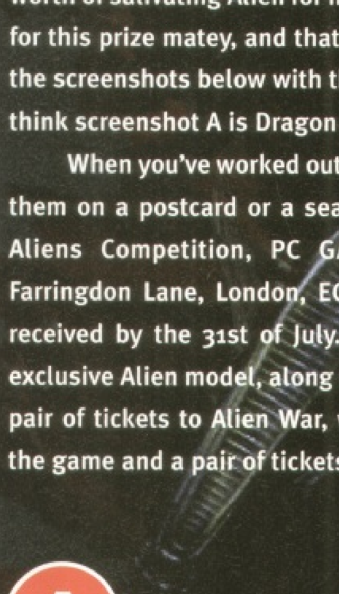
YOU'VE SEEN THE FILMS, NOW EXPERIENCE THE REALITY
ALIEN WAR
TROCADERO CENTRE, COVENTRY STREET PICCADILLY CIRCUS, LONDON
ALIEN WAR
PRIVILEGE CARD
2 FOR 1 ENTRY PASS

Gimme, Gimme!

Well, hang on a second. We're not going to give away £500 worth of salivating Alien for nothing. No, you've got to work for this prize matey, and that means correctly matching up the screenshots below with their titles. For example, if you think screenshot A is Dragon Lore, then jot down A4.

When you've worked out the answers for all four, write them on a postcard or a sealed envelope and send it to: Aliens Competition, PC GAMES, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. All entries must be received by the 31st of July. The winner will receive the exclusive Alien model, along with a copy of the game and a pair of tickets to Alien War, while ten runners-up will get the game and a pair of tickets to Alien War.

A



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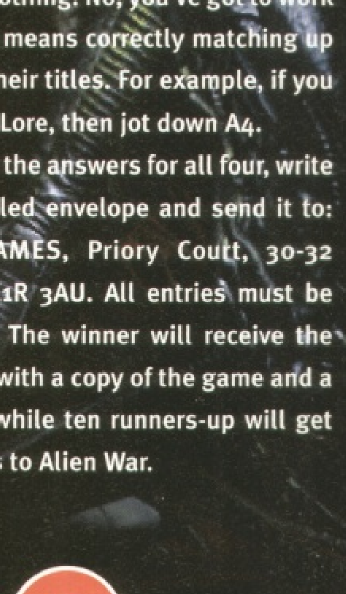

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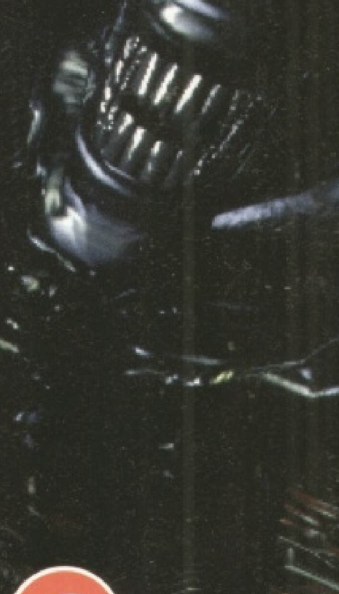

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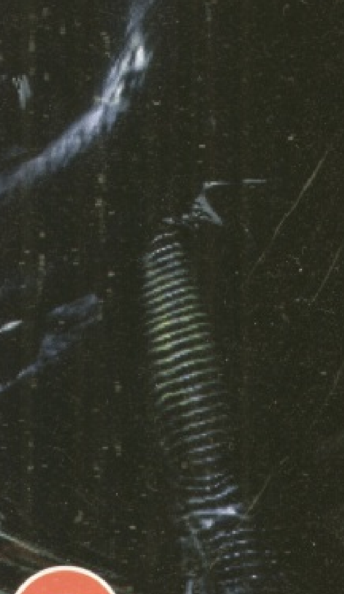

1. Air Power
2. Warriors
3. Mega Race
4. Dragon Lore

The Small Print
This competition is not open to employees of EMAP Images or Mindscape, or any of their friends or relatives. The competition closes on the 31st of July, and all winners will be notified shortly after. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Only one entry per household. While every care is taken, we cannot be held responsible for any entries lost or damaged in the post.

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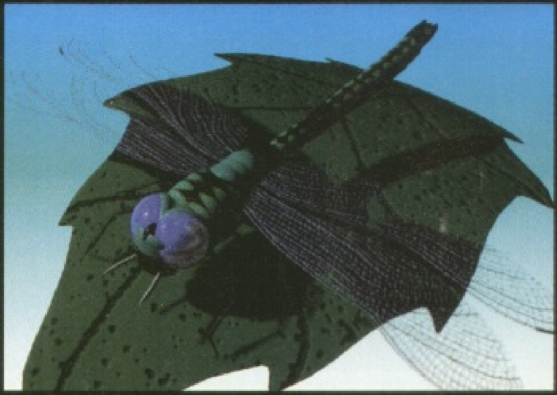

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Dr SPANNER'S
Bits 'n' PCs

Something special this month, as the doc gives VR headsets an examination. Open wide and say "Wow!".

i·glasses!
PERSONAL DISPLAY SYSTEM
VIRTUAL i-O

On The 'Ead, Mate!

Sick of staring at the screen for hours and getting a headache after concentrating really hard on your fave games? Feel too distanced from the action and looking for some way to get that in-yer-face experience? Bored with virtual cockpits and having to press a key to look up and down? Well then, take a quick gander at these babies for a moment. They're going to change the whole way you look at things — and that's guaranteed.

No, the things you're seeing dotted around this page aren't helmets for extra-cool cyclists. Neither are they the new range of Ray Bans. They're VR headsets, and we've been looing forward to this moment in the office for *ages*.

In fact, we've been looking forward to it since PC GAMES was launched. Why? Because virtual reality promises to be the start of a whole new gaming experience, and because for all the promises that the headsets were virtually here it's only now becoming a reality (no pun intended).

What VR headsets do is to put a pair of tiny screens in front of your eyes and headphones over your ears, totally immersing you in the game you're playing. But there's more, since they also add to the games themselves and even the gameplay. The headsets have motion tracking, which means that if you move your head, the view moves with you. So, you really can look around you in Doom or Dark Forces or whatevr your favourite flight sim is.

The thing you'll notice about each of those games is that they're 3D games. Motion tracking doesn't help when playing other stuff, because there's nothing to look around. The only benefit is in the total immersion. Strategy gaming in VR is just plain silly, since it doesn't add a whole heap to the game.

That said, there's been a lot of hype over the last couple of years about this stuff, and finally I got my grubby little mits on the finished products. Was it all worth it? Read on...

i-Glasses

The company's called Virtual i-O, and they're the new kids on the VR block. However, they're also the guys who've got their stuff together and looking good in the shortest time.

i-glasses is a wild invention which looks totally cool when you're wearing it, and works completely differently from the competition. You can see through the screens for starters, which means that you can use the keyboard or spot somebody making rude gestures at you while you're plugged in.

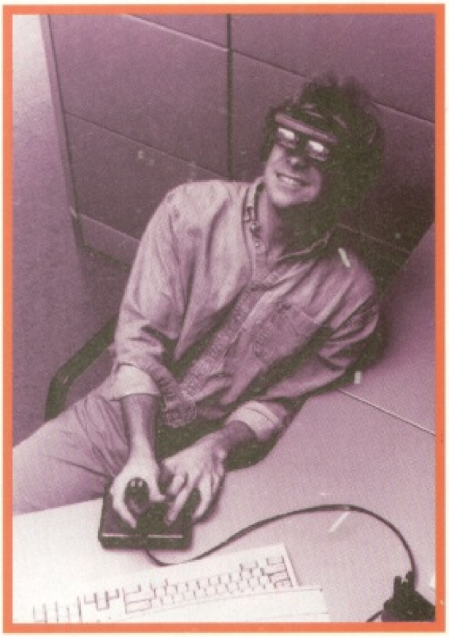
There's a 'blast shield' if you want total darkness, but being able to see out is pretty useful since you'll never suffer motion sickness, a bit of a problem for some people using the other sets if they wear them for too long. The other thing is just how light they are. You hardly know you're wearing them, which is great. Heavy headsets are a pain in the neck, believe me — in the most literal sense.

Add to this excellent picture quality by VR standards and the cheapest price of any of the sets (still bloody expensive, mind you, although prices should drop over the next few months in all VR), and it looks like a winner.

Well, yes and no. I liked the i-glasses. Lots. And lots. They were extremely easy to install, easy to adjust and easy to use. But the problem is that they aren't total immersion because you can see (and hear as well — the headphones aren't very big) what's going on outside in the *real* world.

It's horses for courses in the end, but the experience wasn't any worse for it as far as I was concerned. You might think differently and prefer to go for the total feel, but there's one more feature to entice you: the i-glasses are TV compatible too, which is perfect for late nights when you don't want to disturb anyone in the house and fancy watching the late night slasher movie on Channel 4.

● **Distributed by: ICE. Price: £599. Tel: (01453) 821814.**



CyberMaxx

CyberMaxx has a bit of a chequered past, headset-wise. They've been around for ages, but went through at least one massive redesign when it was clear that the product was totally crap. They changed distributors in the UK from ICE, who now do the i-glasses. And they aren't quite certain exactly when the gear will be available over here (but it will be in the next few weeks for sure).

This would all be by the by, except that the product's a bit chequered too. It offers a more total immersion experience than the i-glasses, without being as heavy or as difficult to install as the VFX1. In theory that should make it the perfect middle-ground headset offering something for just about everyone.

Unfortunately, though, as it stands the design means that it tends towards offering the worst of both worlds. It may not be that heavy, but the unbalanced weight (especially around the face) and the bizarre torture-device adjustment controls make it less than 100% pleasant to wear after a while. It may be airy and easy to get working, but the construction is weak with controls feeling like they'd break off in a minute — the last thing you need when you're busy batting Imps in Cyberspace.

The only reason I'm being quite so harsh is that this is a lot of money we're talking about if you fancy buying a headset, and it might as well be just right. There's certainly nothing wrong with the picture, and the sound is very nice indeed, but it strikes me as being a so-so product where excellence is really needed. Harsh, I know, but essentially fair. Perhaps by the next generation of headsets they'll have got the problems sussed and will be right up there in the marketplace. Not for now, though.

● **Distributed by: EuroDirect. Price: £703.83. Contact: (01483) 776577.**

HEADGEAR
FREE CD-ROM
VFX1 HEADGEAR

(Above) Although a reviewable version of Forte's VFX-1 headset wasn't available at the time of going to press, early indications are that it could prove to be the best of the bunch.
(Left) CyberMaxx's headset in action. Hey — just *love* the beard, Mister...

VFX-1

Right up front I'll admit that Forte didn't get me a headset in time to do the same tests as with the others. That's because it needed a few tweaks before release, which should be sorted by the time you get to read any of this.

However, I have been using this piece of kit (in its development form) on and off for a couple of years now, so I can tell you plenty about it in general. Yes, for a couple of years it's been on the verge of release, and only just now is it hitting the shelves. Still, it has got better over time and, although it's the most expensive of the big three headsets you'll see this Summer, it is very good quality.

The VFX-1 is designed by an outfit called Forte to offer *total* total immersion. A nuclear bomb could go off outside while you're playing with it and you wouldn't notice. It's built like the proverbial brick lavvy (although I still wouldn't recommend dropping it from a great height — VR requires some sensitive parts) but manages to be remarkably comfy. It's snug around your head without chaffing, thanks to generous amounts of padding and, although heavy, has the weight distributed just right. The picture and sound quality in excellent, too.

If you're going to really get into your games then this is the way to go, but it's also the headset most likely to leave you disorientated after a sesh. Because you can't see out for love nor money while playing, you'll be glad for Forte's own controller, the CyberPuck, which puts easy control in your reach.

The only other little flies in Forte's virtual ointment? You do look like a bit of a prat wearing the VFX-1, since it's an ugly piece of kit, and the installation is a bitch. As for the experience, though, you won't better it — and that's testimonial enough for me.

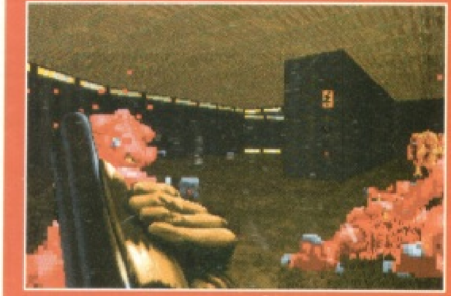
● **Distributed by: Zye Technology. Price: £927.08. Tel: (01293) 531221.**

A Sight For Sore Eyes

So what games are best on VR headsets, then? Many of the big developers are thinking about converting their games to make use of VR headset compatibility, and some are even looking at designing games especially to use the motion tracking as a part of the game.

The games that you'll want to try if you test-drive the headsets for yourself are Doom (or one of its variants — Dark Forces is a goody), Descent (decidedly weird, but definitely superior play in the 3D environment), System Shock (RPGs will never be the same) and a good flight-sim. Flight Unlimited has the best support so far, but expect others to follow suit from now on.

And the future? Well, think about racing games where you can look over your shoulder to see who's coming up behind, or a graphical adventure in *real* 3D, where you pick up and use objects in the first-person perspective? These, and more options besides, are just over the horizon...



Doom II Screensaver

You've played the game, you've read the hints and now you've got the chance to see your Windows invaded by the assorted Hellspawn of the world's favourite game. Flying toasters? Pah, who needs them. Give this a shot (quite literally) and nobody'll dare call you boring again just because you like spending your time in Windows.

The screensaver comes in four modules. In Barrels-O'-Fun you can watch a poor defenceless demon saunter past a line of barrels. Suddenly, one of the weapons randomly pops up and starts firing. Oh dear, it would seem that the barrels have gone off in a chain reaction, and the demon is nothing but a red smudge on the inside of your monitor.

The other three modules are the Duel (where two randon creatures get to beat each other silly), Fireworks (in which creatures get thrown up from the bottom of the screen and, as they start falling again, they explode messily) and my personnal favourite, the Skeet Shoot (monsters get toasted by an Arch-Vile before a shotgun finishes them off).

Nobody's ever going to claim that the Doom II Screensaver pushes your PC system to the limits, or even that it's a graphical feast — if you've got Windows then you can doubtless find something much prettier. Still, it's got a fun quality about it and that can't be bad. A few more modules would have been good, and who knows, maybe they'll bring out some more some time.

Overall, this modules features are nicely put together with masses of controls (how long before the screens change, the sound options, and all that jazz) and it's just good to watch Doom carnage without being in danger of getting wasted yourself. All that *and* it saves your screen.

● **Distributed by: GT Interactive. Price: £29.99. Tel: (0171) 258 3791.**

Amazing 3D Games Adventure Set

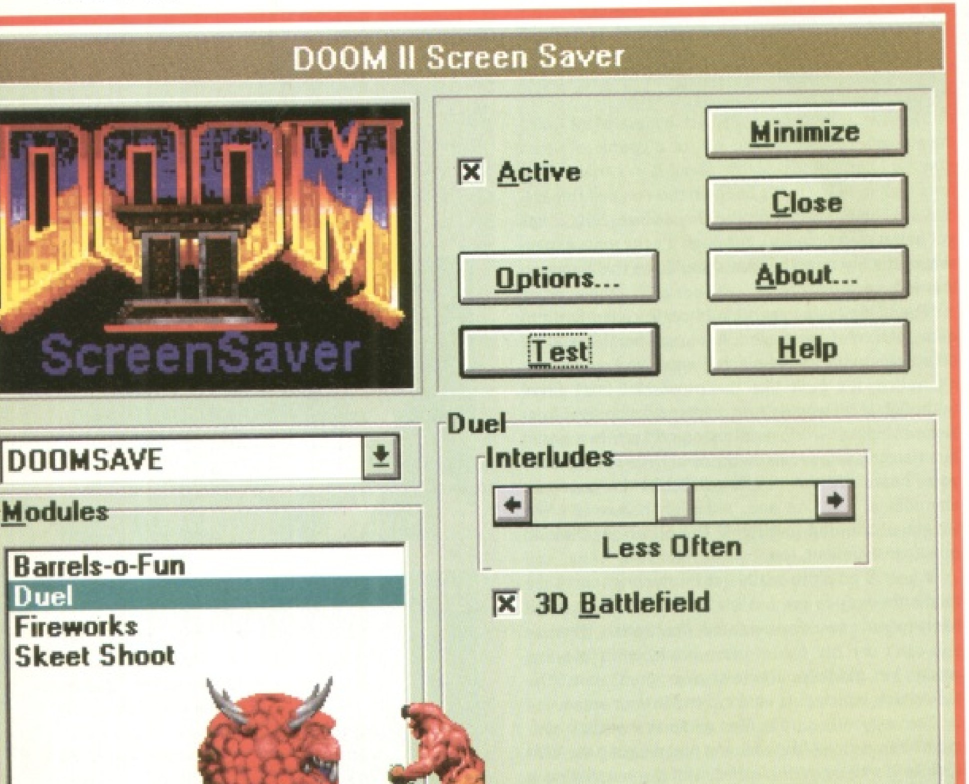
Personally I reckon that books about computers are really yawn-worthy and never really bother with them. However, that said, I did stop for a second glance at this little number (actually bloody thick) by Lary Myers.

A3DGAS is basically a how-to book, in this case how-to make a 3D game. It comes complete with a CD-ROM on which is a copy of a 3D engine to get you up and running, and the bulk of the book tells you what to do with it. It's not simple by any stretch of the imagination, because you effectively have to learn a programming language, but if you're willing to read a few pages a day and take it methodically, then Lary's pretty good at explaining what's going on.

Once you've mastered the basics then the little bells and whistles bits start. There's a section on designing levels, on texturing floors, on animations, and all sorts of things that turn a simple idea into a real game. Although theref's chat on secrets and sliding doors, don't expect to be coming up with the next Doom here. Not that you'll have any problems impressing your mates after a little while, though, because the results can be remarkable after a while.

All of which is thanks to Lary and his easy-going style of writing. Which is good news if you fancy becoming a game design guru, but get thoroughly intimidated by hundreds of pages of code to follow. A3DGAS is a lot to read, for sure, but you don't half feel good when you get some results.

● **Published by: IDG Books. Price: £38.99. Tel: (0181) 579 2652.**



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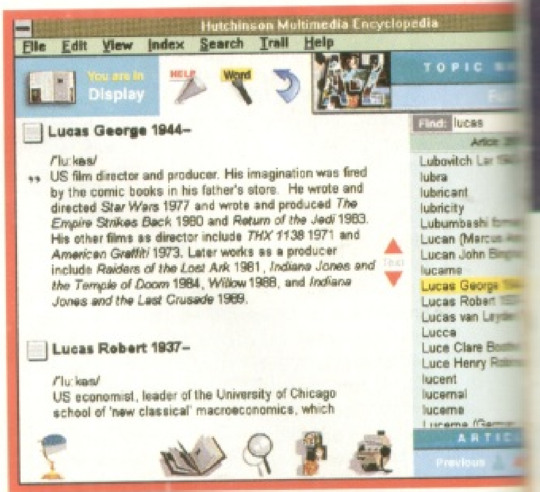
DOOMSAVE

☒ 3D Battlefield



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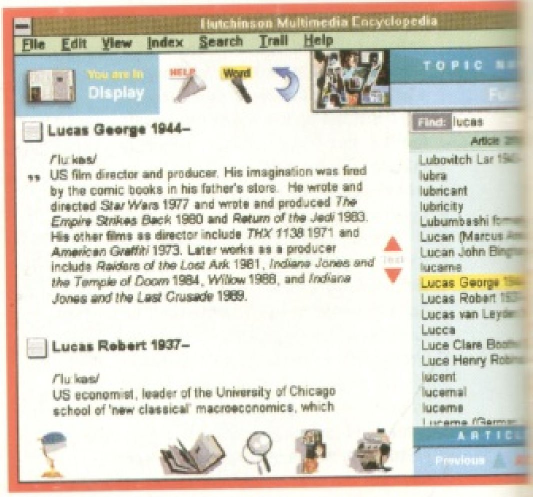
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Hutchinson Multimedia Encyclopedia

Oi, am I missing something here? Am I the only person in the world who expects some proper multimedia in his multimedia encyclopedia? Yeah, it seemed a bit odd to me, too.

Hutchinson seem to be under the impression that if you throw together 34,000 bits of information, an atlas and a dictionary then you've got a winning formula on your hands. Sorry guys, but that's not quite the case. If it's on CD-ROM then it needs more pictures and sounds to go with the text, and just plain more text in each description.

You see, for all those 34,000 entries, you only get a tiny bit on each subject. Compared to Encarta's pages of information and oodles of real multimedia bits, it's a lost cause all round. Now don't get me wrong about this — there *are* pictures and even video clips. They just don't add a whole heap to the stuff you'd look up.

Put that together with the fact that this is an English encyclopedia and it doesn't have any more than the American efforts about European affairs (and certainly has less about American affairs), and I reckon this is nobody's bargain.

Let other multimedia producers beware and learn the lesson that Hutchinson have been taught the hard way. Terminally average multimedia simply doesn't cut it in this world any more. Go back to the drawing board and try again...

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If you've got something to say, say it to Dave the Editor at: Letters, PC GAMES, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Or Fax him on: (0171) 972 6710, or e-mail him at: PCREVIEW@CIX.COMPULINK.CO.UK.

LETTERS

No Trouble...

Dear PC GAMES,

I would like to say a big 'Thank you' to The TroubleShooter (June Issue) for helping me nurse my poor old hard disk back to health. I traded in my Acorn Archimedes (please don't laugh) for a spanking new PC just six months ago, so I haven't quite got a grip on the technical side of things yet. Consequently, I find articles like TroubleShooter invaluable when it comes to sorting out the messes I've managed to create.

My problem was a bit different to that of Befuddled of Bournemouth's, and I'd like to share it with your readers so that they don't make the same mistake I did. I own a 66MHz 486DX2 with 8Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, Sound Blaster 16, MS-DOS 6.2, Windows 3.11 and XTree Gold. Since I hate Windows and haven't managed to get my head round DOS yet, I use XTree to find my way around my hard disk, copy files and all the other mundane things you have to do to get games and applications working. It has a very useful command called PRUNE which lets you delete entire directory trees along with all the files they contain, which is very useful when it comes to getting rid of unwanted games and the like. Unfortunately, it's also quite dangerous.

Back in December, I installed a game demo from a CD I got on the front of a magazine (though not yours, I hasten to add). Although I read the instructions carefully and had the right memory requirements to run the game, I just couldn't get the bloody thing working. I decided to have a look at the file in XTree, and what did I find?

Well, the game directory was there, but instead of containing lots of nice game files, I found the entire contents of my hard disk, along with directory structures, hidden files — you name it — reproduced exactly. It looked as though I'd copied everything on my hard disk into the new directory.

Not being very bright when it comes to PCs, I panicked and PRUNEd the lot. Hey presto! One very empty hard disk. Many hours of re-installing programs later, I decided to bin the offending CD and forget about it. But four months later, exactly the same thing happened with a different game demo. This time I remembered not to delete anything, and ran SCANDISK instead which worked a treat, getting rid of the extra directories but leaving my hard disk intact.

Apparently (or so the guy on the helpline told me), this problem affects a small number of CDs, and is caused by something known as a 'file allocation table error'. What actually happens is that the faulty program creates a mirror image of your hard disk in a directory. So, although it looks as though all your files have been copied there, it's an illusion — it's just that you can see the *same* files in two different places. As a result, if you try to delete them, you're actually deleting your original files.

Anyway, thanks again for letting me know about SCANDISK, and if this problem happens to you, just load up SCANDISK and it should sort you out.

Peter Howard,
Huntingdon, Cambs

Glad that ol' Trubbsy's advice proved useful, Peter — we aim to please. As sharp-eyed readers may have noticed, our resident technical agony aunt has been absent the last couple of issue. However, rest assured that she'll return again soon in the very near future, with yet more essential hints to help you survive the rigours of PC ownership.

Far Too Small!

STARLETTER

Dear PC GAMES,

A word in your ears. Full Throttle — 95%? I don't think so. I am a big fan of adventure games, and when I read your review of LucasArts' latest in June's PC GAMES I knew I had to have it. Ten hours and forty quid later, I'd finished the bloody thing.

Yes, I'll admit that it was a very enjoyable ten hours, and I have to agree with David Upchurch that the story was brilliant, the graphics were amazing and the hero was definitely the coolest bunch of pixels I've ever laid eyes on. But I also thought the puzzles were far too easy and I was able to whizz through the whole game without so much as engaging a brain cell. I'm not a genius by any means (I'm actually rather proud of my four GCSEs) so there's no excuse for this at all.

Full Throttle makes for a great day's entertainment, but please remember that us poor punters actually have to part with real cash for this kind of thing. I'd really appreciate it if you gave some indication of the length of time it would take to finish games when you review them. Whatever happened to value for money?

Andrew McLeod,
Ayr, Scotland.

Difficulty levels are notoriously hard for software developers to judge — what's easy-peasy to one gamesplayer is mind-wrenchingly taxing to another.

That said, you're not the only person to complain that Full Throttle's too easy, Andrew — indeed, in my review I mentioned that the puzzles were somewhat lacking. Even so, I'm amazed that you completed the game quite so quickly — it took me four days all told, but then I'm thick.

At PC GAMES the whole team is very aware that it's in an extremely privileged position of being able to play games for free. We realise that you, our readers, have to pay a lot of dosh when you buy a new game, and so value for money is something we take very seriously.

Seen It, Done It

Dear PC GAMES,

I know it's a boring old topic, but I've just been reading your report about the Los Angeles E^3 computer show in your July issue, and I can't help wondering if there's such a thing as an original PC game any more.

Pretty much all of the games you mentioned, bar one or two notable (and noble) exceptions, were either sequels or clones of games that we've already seen umpteen times before. Personally I'm sick to death of Doom clones, no matter how good, and if I ever see another boring 'interactive' movie I think I'm going to puke.

It would be nice if somebody could come out with something a bit different, instead of trying to cash in on the past by concentrating on sequels, clones and revamps of tired old games like Loderunner. Well, I guess it's back to Minesweeper for me then, isn't it?

Terry Ashe,
Brighton, East Sussex.

It's *Mega!*

Dear PC GAMES,

It's my younger brother's birthday soon and he wants me to buy him a good beat-'em-up for our PC. You seemed to like Super Streetfighter 2 Turbo and Warriors, but his favourite games are Virtua Fighters and Tekken. Do you know if there's any chance that either of these are going to be released on PC, and if not, is there anything similar being planned?

Rachael Smith,
Croydon, Surrey.

Neither Virtua Fighters or Tekken are currently scheduled for release on the PC, and to be honest I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for them either. However, there's a PC beat-'em-up in a very similar vein called FX Fighters, which is due for release any day now. Programmed by Argonaut (the people behind Creature Shock) and published by GTE Interactive, it promises to bring PC fighting games well and truly into the 90s. We should have a review of it next issue...

Text Best Thing?

Dear PC GAMES,

I'm a programmer for an insurance company, but I writing enjoy text adventures in my spare time.

What I want to know is whether you think there's still a market for this kind of game because most people appear to want fancy graphics, cinematic music and maybe a few well-known actors thrown in for good measure. I was thinking of distributing a couple of my best adventures as Shareware, and wondered if they might be suitable for one of your cover disks.

I've tried them out on a couple of non-computer owning friends who claimed to like them, but I'm not sure if they would go down so well with people who are used to more sophisticated games. What do you think?

Tom Callaghan,
Bristol.

Why not give it a try? You've got absolutely nothing to lose. True, many modern players do expect their games to be full of over-the-top bells and whistles, but there's still a large percentage who remember the 'good old days' when 'stunning graphics' meant five monochrome sprites wandering around an empty screen. Such people would no doubt welcome your games with open arms.

NEXT MONTH

We're All Going On A
Summer Holiday!

Er, not quite. In fact, holidays will be the last thing on our minds over the next couple of months, because we'll be working harder than ever on a new look, new size, new *everything* basically, PC GAMES.

Of course, exact details of what the new PC GAMES is going to be like is all pretty hush-hush, mum's-the-word, on-a-need-to-know-basis, have-to-kill-you-if-you-knew at the moment, but what we can tell you is that you won't have seen a PC games magazine like it. We're all pretty excited here about what we've got planned, I can tell you — and you will be too, when you see it.

The problem is, it's going to take time to get all these excellent new ideas into place which is why, sadly...

There won't be a September Issue of PC GAMES!

However, we'll be back the month after, so keep an eye out for us at your local newsagent. (In fact, it'll be almost impossible to bloody miss us. Whoops! I think I've said too much already...)

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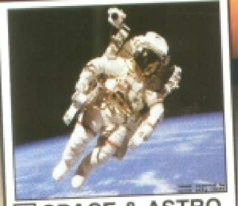

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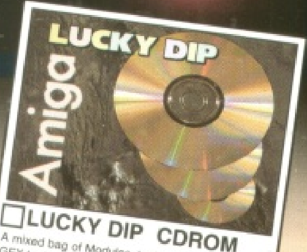

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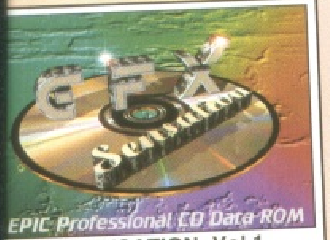

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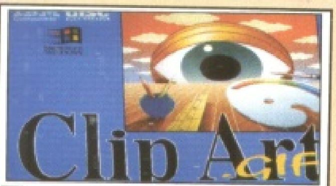

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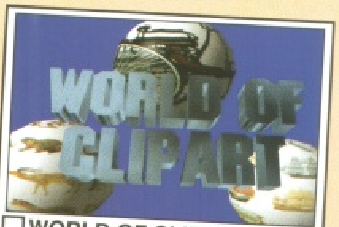

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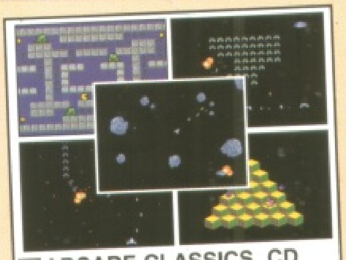

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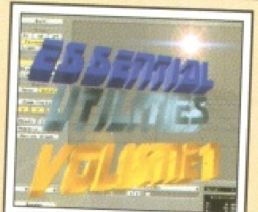

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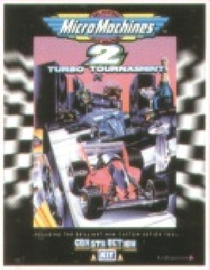

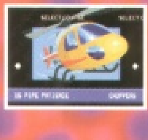

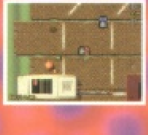

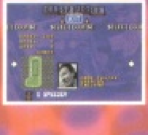

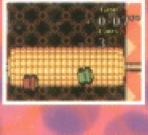

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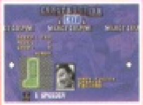

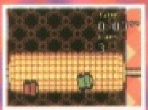

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